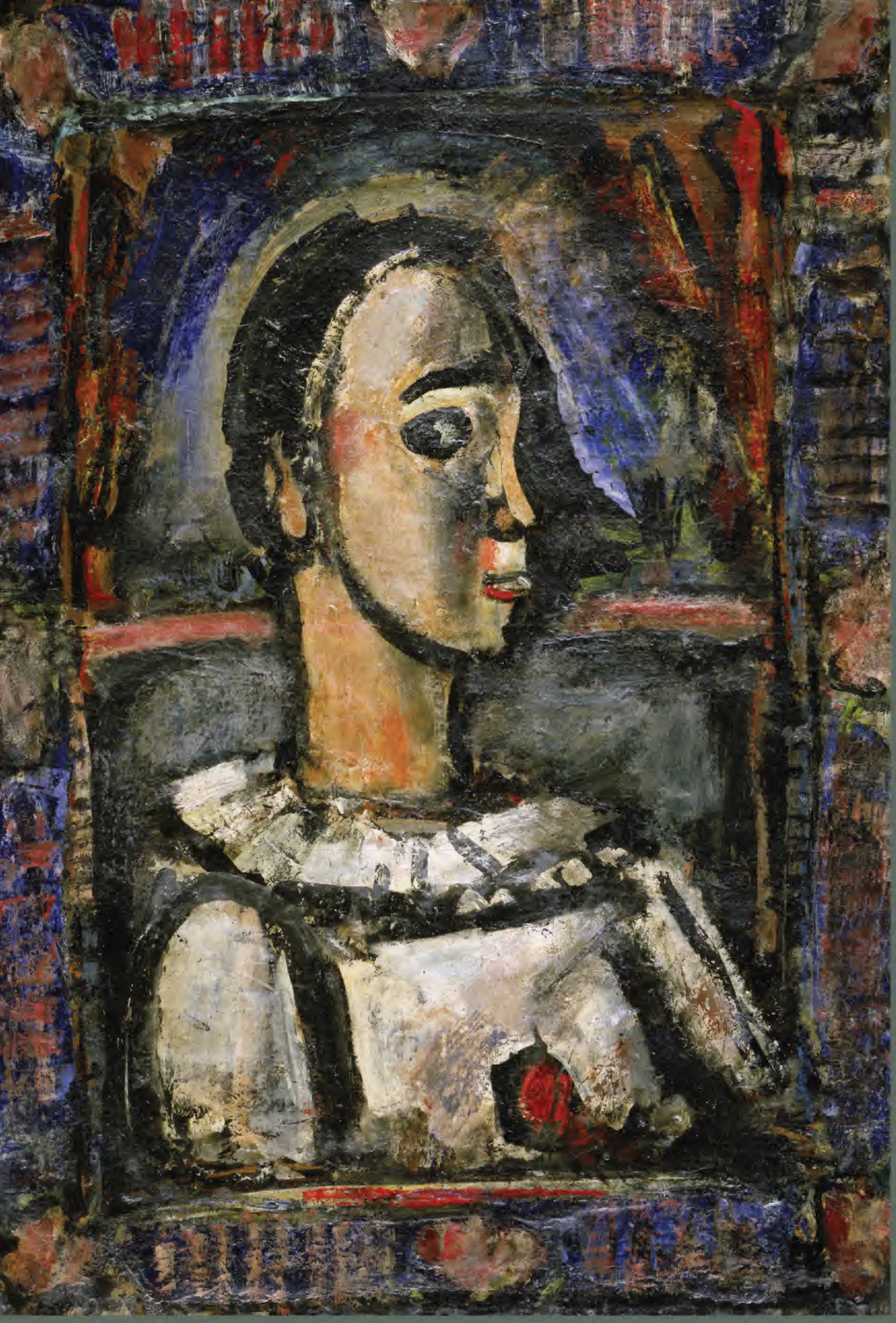

MYSTIC MASQUE

Semblance and Reality in GEORGES ROUAULT

1871–1958

Edited by Stephen Schloesser

MYSTIC MASQUE: SEMBLANCE AND REALITY IN GEORGES ROUAULT, 1871–1958

Marking the fiftieth anniversary of Georges Rouault's death in 1958, this volume accompanies an exhibition mounted at the McMullen Museum of Art at Boston College from August 30 to December 7, 2008. Focusing on meanings preserved in the French word *masque*, the book explores the many "masks" that Rouault painted, those of circus players, dancers, prostitutes, and judicial figures, as well as the iconic *Sainte Face* (holy face) of Christ.

More than thirty essays based on new research by scholars from a variety of disciplines recover Rouault's keen sense of disjunction, unintended consequences, and ironic reversals. Several scholars focus on works from the artist's early period (1903-1920) to demonstrate Rouault's preoccupation with social inequalities. Other essays on the *Réincarnations du Père Ubu* (1932) decode his pictorial commentary on the French colonial enterprise abroad. Study of "unfinished works," donated by the Rouault family in 1963 to the French state, reveals details of the artist's working process throughout four decades.

Indebted to and building on recent groundbreaking scholarship in France, this volume aims to introduce Rouault to a new generation. By uncovering dissonant aspects of his work, frequently obscured by forced conventional consonances, *Mystic Masque* unveils the artist in a paradoxical light: on the one hand, simpler, freer and more visceral; on the other, more luminous, sensuous, and intellectually complex than the Rouault known before.

This publication is issued in conjunction with the exhibition *Mystic Masque: Semblance and Reality in Georges Rouault*, 1871-1958, organized by the McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College.

McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College
August 30 – December 7, 2008

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Back: Georges Rouault, *Véronique*, ca. 1945. Oil on canvas, mounted on panel, 19 3/5 x 14 inches. Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (AM4250P).

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CONTENTS

Preface
Nancy Netzer 7

Introduction: Voltaire and Veronica, Symbolist-Realist Judgment
Stephen Schloesser 11

PART I: 1871–1901

1871–1901: Realism, Symbolism, Mystic Modernism
Stephen Schloesser 23

The Refuge of Art: Gustave Moreau and the Legacy of Symbolism
Jeffery Howe 45

Erasing Time and Place: Rouault and "Medieval" Art
Virginia Reinburg 63

PART II: 1902–1920

1902–1920: The Hard Metier of Unmasking
Stephen Schloesser 79

Georges Rouault: Action Painter
Jean-Marie Tézé, S.J. 105

Rouault and the Dynamics of Self-Deception
Margaret R. Miles 109

Tears at the Heart of Spectacular Paris: Rouault's Prostitutes
Mary Louise Roberts 117

1908/2008: Rouault's *Whore*, Freud's Gender-bent Judge, and Unmasking as Infinite Regression
Paul Breines 125

PART III: 1921–1929

1921–1929: Jazz Age Graphic Shock
Stephen Schloesser 133

Notes on the *Miserere* plates exhibited in *Mystic Masque*
Stephen Schloesser 157

"Spleen and Ideal in Strife": Rouault's Baudelaire, 1918–1927
Soo Yun Kang 181

The Aesthetics of Shock: Baudelaire, Benjamin, Rouault
Susan A. Michalczyk 193

Rouault's Dying Slave: Being Human as an Unfinished Work
Naomi Blumberg 205

Rouault and Expressionism
Claude Cernuschi 215

Père Ubu: Archetype of Social Dysfunction
John J. Michalczyk 229

The Mystery of Rouault's *Réincarnations*: A Sixteen-Year Obsession
Marie Garraut 247

The Colonial Scourge: Père Ubu from the Brazza Mission to the Paris Exposition Coloniale
Jody Blake 257

Technique and Space in the *Miserere*
John McCoy 277

PART IV: 1929–1939

1929–1939: Mystic Masque, Hieratic Harmony
Stephen Schloesser 285

Hieratic Grandeur: Weightless World, Hidden Order, Magnifying the Modest, 1930–1943
Gael Mooney and Stephen Schloesser 309

In Deed and in Need: the Friendship in Art of Georges Rouault and André Suarès
Thomas Epstein 321

André Suarès, *Passion* (excerpts)
Translated by Thomas Epstein 335

PART V: 1940–1958

1939–1958: Perpetual *Peregrinus*: *Toute vue des choses qui n'est pas étrange est fausse*
Stephen Schloesser 341

French Resistance: Rouault's Partisan History of the Modern
Tara Ward 357

The Mask of Villon: Neo-Medievalist Realism in Rouault's *Divertissement*
Anne A. Davenport 365

"Pilgrim of art": Artistic Autonomy and Christian Commitment in Rouault's Late Work
Stephan Dahme 379

Lacrymae rerum: Creative Intuition of the Transapparent Reality
Bernard Doering 389

Creating Rouault's Legacy, 1945–1965: Commander in the Légion d'honneur, Artist of Catholic Modernity
Sheila Nowinski 399

Rouault's Faces of Christ: Notes for a Pictorial Contemplation
Nora Possenti Ghiglia 411

Rouault in New York: Art and Reputation in the Mid-Century United States
David Quigley 423

PART VI: UNFINISHED WORKS

1963: *Les inachevés*: The Donation of Mme Rouault and her Children
Stephen Schloesser 431

Et Véronique au tendre lin passe encore sur le chemin...
James F. Keenan, S.J. 437

Rouault's Christ: A Call to Aesthetic Conversion
Roberto S. Goizueta 449

PLATES 459

Preface

Shortly after arriving at Boston College in 1999 to teach in the history department, Professor Stephen Schloesser began speaking with the McMullen Museum about his dissertation research on Georges Rouault. Conducted in the archives of the Fondation Georges Rouault, thanks to the generous assistance of the artist's daughter, the late Isabelle Rouault, this work was eventually published as part of *Jazz Age Catholicism: Mystic Modernism in Postwar Paris, 1919-1933* (University of Toronto Press, 2005). Schloesser lamented that Rouault's oeuvre had not been critically re-examined in a North American exhibition since the 1952-53 retrospective shown at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Cleveland Museum and the Los Angeles County Museum. To his mind, Rouault has been reduced in stature during the intervening decades, caricatured as a "painter of clowns and Christs." Schloesser's sentiments echo the byline of a recent review of the artist's work appearing in the Parisian *Le Figaro*: "Il était profondément chrétien, on en fit un peintre bigot." (He was profoundly Christian, others turned him into a zealously religious painter.)

The approaching fiftieth anniversary of Rouault's death in 2008 inspired the McMullen to gather a group of scholars to organize an exhibition and accompanying catalogue that would recover Rouault's "profoundly Christian" (and particularly Catholic) identity while simultaneously removing some of the "zealous" accretions of the decades. Loans secured for the exhibition proved to reveal aspects and themes of Rouault's oeuvre that defy caricatured interpretations of the artist. For example, study of the Boston Public Library's five major deluxe folio editions printed during Rouault's lifetime (three of them published by Ambroise Vollard) has spawned a new understanding of the inextricable link between texts and imagery. New readings of the books' texts by Rouault, Vollard, André Suarès, and Charles Baudelaire, as well as of biblical and classical sources exposed multiple layers of meaning and the enormously complex and complicated mind that lay behind Rouault's illustrations. In addition, examination of works from Rouault's early period (1903-1920), loaned by the Musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris, Mitchell-Innes & Nash, the Museum of Modern Art, and others, has yielded a re-evaluation of a side of the artist critics frequently labeled "ferocious." Both his satirical caricatures of high society as well as his sympathetic portrayal of social outcasts reveal Rouault as an *artiste engagé* very much indebted to realist precursors, especially Honoré Daumier. Finally, recent relaxations of restrictions have allowed a large group of Rouault's unfinished works (*inachevés*), donated to the French state in 1963 by Mme. Rouault and her children, to be loaned by the Centre Pompidou for the first time to an exhibition in the United States. In addition to presenting evidence of Rouault's working processes (one of the pedagogical functions that the Rouault family had originally envisioned in the 1963 donation), these "unfinished works," together with the early-period pieces, help viewers discover, in the words of Pompidou curator Angela Lampe, "a Rouault who is freer, lighter, and more sensual than the one we

thought we knew." To quote *Le Figaro* once again: "On redécouvre ... l'oeuvre flamboyante de cet isolé inclassable." (We rediscover the blazing work of this solitary person who defies classification.)

In addition to recent exhibitions in France, the impetus for the McMullen's revision of Rouault is Stephen Schloesser's ongoing research of twentieth-century Catholic Revivalism. From 2006 to 2008, while occupying the Lo Schiavo chair at the University of San Francisco, and, more recently, back at Boston College, Schloesser headed an interdisciplinary team of contributors, largely chosen from among his colleagues at Boston College: art historians Jody Blake, Naomi Blumberg, Claude Cernuschi, Stephan Dahme, Marie Garraut, Jeffery Howe, Soo Yun Kang, John McCoy, John J. Michalczyk and Tara Ward; painter Gail Mooney; sculptor and aesthetician Jean-Marie Tézé, S.J., historians Paul Breines, Sheila Nowinski, Virginia Reinburg, Mary Louise Roberts, and David Quigley; literary scholars Bernard Doering, Thomas Epstein and Susan A. Michalczyk; philosophers Anne Davenport and Nora Possenti Ghiglia; and theologians Roberto S. Goizueta, James F. Keenan, S.J. and Margaret R. Miles. Their research, coupled with Schloesser's understanding of Rouault's paintings within the intellectual and religious culture of France, has shaped this endeavor; Schloesser has uncovered new evidence, inspired his collaborators to do the same, and has refined his vision for the project as new information emerged. He oversaw the exchange of ideas among authors and peer-review of their essays. It is to Schloesser and the other contributors to this catalogue that we owe our greatest debt of gratitude. Special thanks are also due Jean-Yves and Gilles Rouault, Anne-Marie Agulhon, the other members of the Rouault family, and the Fondation Georges Rouault, without whose ongoing interest, support, and loans of art and archival material, this endeavor would not have been possible. Angela Lampe, curator at the Centre Pompidou and a distinguished Rouault scholar, generously gave time and assistance to both Schloesser and McMullen designer Diana Larsen during their research trips to Paris.

The project would not have gotten off the ground had not Susan Glover, Earle Havens, and Karen Shafts at the Boston Public Library responded with great enthusiasm to our initial request for loans; they made special accommodations for research on the collections and welcomed Boston College students from a course on the exhibition by Schloesser and myself. Robert and Elizabeth Pozen kindly subsidized the photography of the works in the Boston Public Library's collection.

Others from the University have contributed their expertise. In particular, Diana Larsen designed the exhibition to enhance the curator's vision, studied the works in Paris, and selected documents from Rouault's archive in close collaboration with Gilles Rouault. Naomi Blumberg undertook the heroic tasks of editing and producing the catalogue and the exhibition materials; she also arranged the loans of artwork. John McCoy designed this handsome book as well as the exhibition signage. Stephen Vedder produced many of the photographs in this volume. Adeane Bregman, Anne Bernard Kearney, Richard Kearney, Simone Kearney, Kevin Newmark, and Josephine von Henneberg aided with research and translations. Able interns, a graduate student in history, Chris Hightower, and five undergraduates, Victoria Bergman, Alexander Gilman, Dana Jordan, Maura Lucking, and Kristina Wilson assisted in all aspects of exhibition preparation. In addition, students in a museum course focused on the exhibition, Julie Burgess, Katherine Getz, Marina Hernandez, Patton Hindle, Carolyne McGee, Brett O'Brien, Conor O'Phelan, Caitlin Pereira, and Jacqueline Smyth, contributed valuable research on individual works. We also thank Rosanne Pellegrini for publicity, Anastos Chiavaras, Rose Breen, and Jane Hall of our Risk Management office for assistance with insurance, and the members of our Advancement office, especially Catherine Concannon, Mary Lou Crane, Ginger Dewing, and Caitrin Dunphy, for aiding our funding efforts.

Many beyond our University contributed to research and securing loans and photographs. In particular, we thank Anne-Marie Agulhon, Marie-Hélène Dumortier, Isabelle Laval, Marie-Christine Nouaille, Olivier Nouaille, Gilles Rouault, and Jean-Yves Rouault (Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris); Sandra and Robert Bowden; Stéphanie

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The Museum's ability to realize a project of this scope owes much to the generosity of the McMullen Family, especially Jacqueline McMullen, and to the administration of Boston College, especially president William P. Leahy, S.J., provost Cutberto Garza, vice-provosts Kevin Bedell and Patricia DeLeeuw, and dean of arts and sciences Patrick Maney. Major funding for the exhibition and the catalogue came from Boston College and the Patrons of the McMullen Museum, chaired by C. Michael Daley. Additional support was provided by the Florence Gould Foundation and an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and Humanities. Without the commitment and dedication of everyone involved, this research project would never have been brought to fruition and shared with such a large audience.

Nancy Netzer

Director and Professor of Art History

Introduction: Voltaire and Veronica, Symbolist–Realist Judgment

Stephen Schloesser

He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
    or decide by what his ears hear;
but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
    and decide with equity for the meek of the earth.
        Book of Isaiah[1]

I do not believe in what I touch, nor in what I see.
    I believe only in what I do not see and uniquely in what I feel.
        Gustave Moreau[2]

In reality, I have painted with my eyes open
    to the visible world night and day,
but I have also closed them from time to time
    the better to achieve greater depth of vision.
        Georges Rouault[3]

In the masque that is Georges Rouault's human comedy, the epistemological act of judgment plays a commanding role in the artist's *dramatis personae*. Rouault's world is a tragic comedy of errors, marked by epistemological uncertainty and misapprehension. Judicial figures must necessarily make their judgments based on the limitations of sense data, the selective memories of witnesses, and the frequently sophistic arguments of lawyers. As a consequence, the innocence of criminals is too often misjudged. Similarly, since clowns and prostitutes (so-called "*filles de joie*") intentionally paint their faces and don colorful costumes to entertain others, the viewer misjudges these tragic lives as comic. Rouault explicitly used these figures who paint their faces as types for the dissimulating activity of human beings in general, asking: *Who does not wear a mask?* (**no. 27g**). A diptych poses the rhetorical question: *Are we not slaves…believing ourselves to be kings?* (**nos. 27e** and **27f**).

Focusing on multivalent meanings preserved in the French, this exhibition explores Rouault's work in two senses of *masque*. First, displaying the many outward "masks" that Rouault loved to paint—those of

circus players, prostitutes and judicial figures, as well as the iconic holy face (*la sainte face*) of Christ, definitively symbolized by the key figure of Veronica (*vera icon*)—the exhibition recovers Rouault's keen sense of disjunction, unintended consequences, and ironic inversions.

Veronica stands at one end; Voltaire at the other. Rouault reminisced that, as a child visiting his grandfather's home in the Marais district, plaster busts of Racine, Molière, and Voltaire towered over his head. Soon after learning to read he became passionate about literature, including the works of Voltaire.[4] Rouault seems to have imbibed from the Enlightenment *philosophe* not only a keen (and sometimes savage) social satire, but also some of Voltaire's epistemological modesty—a modesty compelled to unmask the pretensions of totalizing knowledge by laying bare the disjunctions between claims and reality. Voltaire's words in his preface to the "Poem on the Lisbon Disaster" (1756), an "Inquiry into the Maxim, 'Whatever is, is right'," might well have been penned by Rouault himself:

> …acutely aware of the miseries of humankind, [the author of this poem] raises his voice against the improper use to which this ancient axiom, "All is well," can be put. He makes his own that dreadful and even more ancient truth, acknowledged by all human beings, that "Evil is loose on the earth." He maintains that the saying "All is well," taken in an absolute sense and without any hope for a future life, is nothing but an insult to the sufferings of our lives.[5]

In 2008, this year memorializing fifty years since Rouault's passing, the exhibition *Mystic Masque* aims at uncovering dissonant aspects of his work that have frequently been obscured by forced conventional consonances. What you see is not what you get.

Employing a second sense of *masque*, this exhibition presents Rouault's depiction of human life as a kind of pageant or guising. Outward appearances misrepresent, dissembling deeper realities. This is true both for Rouault's antagonists—those most highly esteemed by society (judges and lawyers, upper bourgeois women, bureaucrats, military men, and the French Republican Empire's colonial administrators)—as well as for his protagonists—those marginal figures held in low esteem by society (wandering circus players, street-walking prostitutes, slum-dwelling or homeless families, convicted criminals). Rouault summed up this vision perhaps most succinctly in his several studies bearing a line from Virgil's *Aeneid*: "*Sunt lacrymae rerum*": "There are tears (of grief) at the very heart of things" (**nos. 73, 74, 84, 85**).[6]

This dark vision was redeemed for Rouault by the human *masque*'s qualifier, *mystic*. Rouault's comedy is both human and divine, both modern (Honoré de Balzac's *La Comédie humaine*) and medieval (Dante Alighieri's *La Divina Commedia*). It is indeed a *masque*, but one that is ultimately *mystic*. Rouault's world is a profoundly Biblical one in which outward appearances invert unseen reality.

> Ha! You who hide a plan too deep for the LORD,
> whose deeds are in the dark,
> and who say, "Who sees us? Who knows us?"
> You turn things upside down![7]

In such a world, physical sight can obscure depth of vision. Sometimes the blind have comforted those that see (**no. 27ccc**). In the final analysis, behind the faces of Rouault's subjects of mistaken identity plays Christ: the archetype of the one incorrectly (and unjustly) judged by outward semblance and not inward reality; the sudden recognition of whom both subverts and inverts common conventions and perceptions: "Lord, it is you; I recognize you" (**no. 27ff**).

The ancient figure of Veronica, in an act of compassion, correctly perceives the person behind the *persona* and inverts the world right side up. Her ethical act of compassion results in an epistemological revelation. Rouault recovers this traditional encounter of Christ with Veronica on the road and gives it prominence of place in his iconography: "And Veronica with tender linen still walks along the road…" (**nos. 27gg, 71, 72, 75-77**). In a

single act of aesthetic judgment, Veronica unifies ethics and epistemology, will and mind, action and knowledge, compassion and revelation. Beauty unifies goodness and truth.[8]

At the heart of *Mystic Masque* lies the image-text relationship. Any approach to Rouault's images will require at least some knowledge of his own written texts, the texts of others that he illustrated, and the texts of writers who had an important influence on him. This presents a problem, of course, for those in a non-Francophone culture. One aim of *Mystic Masque* is to introduce a new generation of Americans, who may be somewhat unfamiliar with French language and literature, to the complexity and depth of Rouault's vision. Inter-textuality is central to Rouault in at least three ways:

First—Rouault's illustrated folios. Although Rouault is rightly known for his paintings, the great projects that occupied most of his time, thought, and indeed, his life, were illustrations he produced for printed texts, some of which he wrote himself.[9] Thanks to the rich holdings of the Boston Public Library, *Mystic Masque* is able to display selections from each of Rouault's large published folios: the *Réincarnations du Père Ubu* (text by Ambroise Vollard, 1932), *Cirque de l'Étoile filante* (text by Rouault, 1938), and *Passion* (text by André Suarès, 1939), all published by Vollard; *Divertissement* (text by Rouault, 1943), published by Tériade; and *Miserere* (title texts by Rouault, published in 1948).[10] In addition, thanks to the generosity of the Fondation Rouault, the exhibition is also able to display selections from illustrated book projects that circumstances prevented from being completed: fourteen copperplates to illustrate Charles Baudelaire's texts of the *Fleurs du mal* (completed by 1927; published posthumously in 1966); eight aquatints for André Suarès's text *Cirque* (completed 1930, projected but not published by Vollard); and twelve of the initially planned thirty color etchings for Baudelaire's *Fleurs du mal* (printed in 1936 and 1938, unpublished due to Vollard's death in 1939). Although the relationship between text and image varies in degree in all of these works, an acquaintance with the texts—even if of a general kind, as in the case of Baudelaire—is essential to interpreting Rouault's images. Moreover, since Rouault tended to produce great numbers of variations on a circumscribed set of patterned types, the images linked to texts also provide keys to unlocking the layers of meaning in his painted works.

Second—Rouault's published texts. In addition to the large illustrated folios, numerous texts by Rouault appeared over the years in various journals and newspapers, along with three illustrated collections: *Souvenirs intimes* (Personal remembrances, 1926), *Paysages légendaires* (Mythical landscapes, 1929), and *Stella Vespertina* (Stella Vespertina, Latin for "Evening Star," 1947).[11] Rouault noted that he had begun writing such texts, often in spontaneously rhymed verses, after his father died in 1912—they helped him articulate images he was trying to solidify. It is not surprising that Rouault needed words as well as images, for as a number of his titles with multiple variations demonstrate, Rouault's imagination operated poly-semantically; it is only by means of his texts that the viewer can piece together these layered levels of intended meanings. For example: homeless wanderers on the streets (a negative image) are merged into circus players who wander the globe in freedom (a positive image) without the burdens of stability; these two layers in turn are associated with giant waves of fugitives or emigrants popular in nineteenth-century representations (especially Honoré Daumier's); additional layers are provided by the biblical narratives of Cain condemned to wander forever, Israel's exile in Babylon, Israel's Exodus out of Egyptian slavery, and Veronica wiping the face of Christ along the road to Calvary. Multi-layers entail multi-valences: wandering on the road is both punishment and liberation, impoverishment and freedom, cruelty and compassion. Rouault's inter-textuality frustrates one-dimensional categories and resists semantic closure.

Third—Rouault's previously unpublished texts. Rouault wrote hundreds of pages of texts, not intended for any publication whatsoever, fragments of which, however, have happily found their way into print. Raïssa Maritain offered a touching description of these texts:

> Often [Rouault] would take from his pocket papers so illegible that only he could decipher the last poem he had written, or an earlier one he wanted to show us according to his humour of the day. It is perhaps known that this great painter also wrote an incalculable amount of verse. His imagination always at work, his keen feelings of compassion and antagonism, and his satirical wit needed this mode of expression.... Rouault always hesitated to publish them. He was diffident about doing so, not feeling himself to be a master of poetic technique as he was a master of painting technique.[12]

The first collection not made by Rouault himself was *Soliloques* (a copy of which is exhibited in *Mystic Masque*), a selection collated by Claude Roulet from hundreds of loose pages and published in 1944.[13] A second collection, which includes excerpts from most of the works cited above as well as previously unpublished pieces, is *Sur l'art et sur la vie*, published on the occasion of Rouault's birth centenary in 1971. Additional fragments of unpublished writings may be found in Rouault's biography and catalogues raisonnés, as well as in successive editions of the *Miserere*.[14]

One reason that the early twenty-first century provides a new context in which the work of Rouault might be reexamined and appreciated in new ways is visual: artistic practice has seen a return to figuration after a long era dominated by abstraction and theory. (As Bertrand Leclair has recently written, Rouault "paid heavily for his condescension toward theory, particularly after his death, during the decades in which theory reigned as master of contemporary art, while his religious approach appeared to be either little or not at all comprehensible...")[15] A second reason is textual: Rouault's multi-semantic layers can perhaps be better appreciated after the post-structuralist turn in the late twentieth century. A concrete example of such a reading occurs in a colleague's response to one of my queries about translating a passage in Rouault:

> Simply put, it has to do with the *"ne" explétif*, or pleonastic *"ne,"* which remains in French in certain subjunctive constructions, such as with the verb craindre (of which there is a wonderfully ambiguous example in Rousseau having to do with a fear of telling the "truth"—or not...) or with conjunctions such as *avant que*.... But, as in the example from Rousseau, your verb *ensabler* [to cover over with sand] reminds one of how much Heidegger was able to do with the verb *bergen* [recover]. The covering that is finally uncovered at the "ends" of the earth: wouldn't that also be a way of uncovering the "truth" which is, after all, both the end as goal and the end as finitude of the earth as such?
>
> In this case, the "ne" does much more than just hold a place for grammar as conventional structure: it actually enacts—still following Heidegger here—the truth that is revealed (protected, hidden, and unconcealed) in the poetry of language. (Though if one goes as far as Heidegger, one might as well take another step, *le pas au-delà* [the path beyond] as it were, with Nietzsche and Blanchot again...)[16]

In its artistic practices and its historical and literary scholarship, then, the present moment constitutes a new context in which to examine Rouault's images and texts.

As a contribution to such reexamination, the present catalogue features essays by scholars whose work in assorted academic disciplines offers new approaches to Rouault. The essays have been divided into six chronological sections, which, while not meant to be exclusive, attempt to locate the discussions within close proximity to specific works or subjects in certain periods of Rouault's life.

I. 1871-1901. Jeffery Howe's discussion of Gustave Moreau, Rouault's most influential teacher, explores the inter-textual practices of Symbolism.

Howe's attention to bodily sensuality, shame, suffering, and mutilation in symbolist works—images of Salomé's erotic dance, the severed heads of Orpheus and John the Baptist, and the multiple wounds of Saint Sebastian come to mind—bridges Moreau's work to Rouault's own emphasis on bodily expressions of internal states, especially of anguish (in his protagonists) and self-satisfaction (in his antagonists). Virginia Reinburg engages the well-worn but rarely investigated claim that Rouault was influenced by the "medieval." Laying out fin-de-siècle and early-twentieth-century context, Reinburg delineates various medievalisms, including the Catholic revivalist version of a J.-K. Huysmans, the social scientific approach of Johan Huizinga, and, in general, the rhetoric of the "Flemish Primitives," a newly popular art historical vogue that also provided a site of nationalistic competitions for claiming these ambiguously located "primitives." Reinburg also suggests that what Rouault's contemporaries called "medieval" is what we would consider "early-modern," that is, the period from the 1450s through the 1600s marked by the invention of the printing press. Rouault's affection for and interest in the mass-produced book (available to a wide popular audience) with engraved images (like the Renaissance emblem book, producing multiple meanings through text and image) suggests his indebtedness to the early-modern period.

II. 1902-1920. Following the death of Moreau, Rouault's abrupt abandonment of Academic and symbolist forms for the "savage" styles of the new twentieth century comes as a shock. Jean-Marie Tézé offers a reflection on this somewhat inexplicable rupture and, borrowing the term associated with the New York School forty years later, describes Rouault's work as a form of "gestural" abstraction. This is the period in which Rouault begins formulating his cast of characters in the frame of the problem of self-knowledge and self-deception. Margaret Miles's discussion of the dynamics of self-deception looks at the body as the visible site of self-expression. Interior states inscribe themselves on the body, making the physical exterior the locus of psychological knowledge. Mary Louise Roberts discusses Rouault's 1908 *Whore (with Red/brown-colored Hair)*, both as it was seen a century ago and as we can reevaluate it today in its hundredth year. After investigating the cultural meanings of prostitution in fin-de-siècle culture generally as well as more specifically within the thought of Léon Bloy, Roberts suggests that Rouault's depictions of prostitutes might be better situated as representatives of suffering at the heart of a culture based on urban spectacle. Paul Breines also revisits the year 1908, the year in which Sigmund Freud published his analysis of Daniel Paul Schreber's case as "Psychoanalytic Remarks on an Autobiographically Described Case of Paranoia." The published memoir of Schreber, a German judge whose bouts of mental illness led him to imagine himself in gender-bending ways, gave Freud much material as he continued to formulate his science of self-knowledge. Breines's essay serves as a reminder that Rouault's grappling with the problem of self-knowledge and self-deception was at the very crux of anxieties about the fragmented self in the new century.

III. 1921-1929. During the 1920s, Rouault's energy largely went to graphic works, trying to complete illustrations for folio books planned by Ambroise Vollard, with whom he had signed a contract of exclusivity. Soo Yun Kang offers a reading of Rouault's illustrations for Baudelaire's *Fleurs du mal* that will be especially helpful for a reader not yet well-acquainted with the works of the seminal symbolist poet. Kang also notes connections between Rouault's images for the *Fleurs du mal*—published only posthumously in deluxe folio and very little known—and those found in the *Miserere*, very well known thanks to multiple mass-produced and easily available editions. Rouault not only produced the two works contemporaneously, but some of the most vivid wartime plates in the *Miserere* series (for example, those with skeletons) are borrowed from the *Fleurs du mal*. Susan Michalczyk and Claude Cernuschi offer analyses of Rouault's rhetoric. Michalczyk draws on the work of Walter Benjamin to unpack Baudelaire's vision as a poetic of "shock" that Rouault applied in the visual realm. Michalczyk recovers the provocative and abrasive style that once earned Baudelaire a conviction on obscenity charges—and, by inference, also recovers some of Rouault's edge as well. Cernuschi also

draws parallels, demonstrating rhetorical tropes used by both Rouault and artists usually categorized as "expressionists." Like Breines's essay on Freud, Cernuschi expands Rouault's rhetorical connections beyond Paris to Vienna, Berlin, and Scandinavia. Michalczyk's and Cernuschi's rhetorical analyses, read in light of Howe's investigation of Moreau's suffering body, make clear the debt of "expressionism" to "symbolism" and restore fluidity to the porous boundaries delineating the two. Finally, Naomi Blumberg takes a particular graphic work (*Être Dempsey*) that functions as an exemplar of this kind of expressionist anxiety, tracing its genealogy back through Cézanne's bathers and Rodin's *Age of Bronze* to Michelangelo's *Dying Slave*. In the recurrent trope of the slave, condemned criminal, convict, forced laborer, and galley slave (*forçat*)—along with the wrestler (*lutteur*), the boxer, and the flagellated Christ—image and text overlap in numerous ways for Rouault.

John Michalczyk, Marie Garraut, and Jody Blake investigate Rouault's lengthy and somewhat incomprehensible dedication of many years of his life to producing illustrations for Ambroise Vollard's *Réincarnations du Père Ubu*. One of the most unusual offerings of *Mystic Masque* is the exhibition of this work published in 1932, one that is all but unknown today. Michalczyk offers a reading of the images that are, on first glance (and especially without knowledge of the text), somewhat baffling and perhaps incomprehensible. His distinctions between colonizers, indigenous natives, colonized natives, and identities of opposites, not only illuminate this particular folio, but also draw out broader conclusions about Rouault's attitudes toward the French imperialist enterprise. Blake offers a historical overview of the French colonialist project, beginning with Belle Époque scandals and moving forward toward the International Colonial Exhibition of 1931, held in Paris one year before the publication of the *Réincarnations*. Showing bourgeois republican connections drawn between working-class men and women in metropolitan France and indigenous natives in French colonial territories, Blake provides further evidence for Rouault's working-class disdain for the Republican Empire. Garraut offers a close look at Ambroise Vollard—who was of mixed race origins, born and raised in the French colonial territory of La Reunion—and his debt to the original Ubu texts of Alfred Jarry. Garraut traces a continuous thread linking Jarry's fin-de-siècle assaults on the bourgeoisie and Vollard's later attacks on republican imperialists abroad. Demonstrating Rouault's openness to (and perhaps shared sympathies with) the absurdist satirical methods of both Jarry and Vollard, Garraut renders Rouault's sixteen-year "obsession" with Père Ubu less mysterious.

In addition to the *Fleurs du mal* and *Réincarnations*, Rouault produced the *Miserere* in the 1920s as well, a fact easily overlooked due to the delay of its publication until after the Second World War. Stephen Schloesser offers notes on the twenty (out of fifty-eight) plates of the *Miserere* exhibited in *Mystic Masque*, drawing out themes that especially have to do with self-deception and self-knowledge, semblance and reality, sight and blindness. Finally, as a coda to this decade of large graphic productions, John McCoy provides an overview of the various techniques and processes that Rouault used. Explaining how the artist achieved both volume and luminosity without employing either perspective or chiaroscuro, McCoy shows how Rouault achieved the hieratic effect—or perhaps, more popularly, the "stained-glass effect"—for which he became known.

IV. 1929-1939. During the 1930s, an increasingly ominous decade of Great Depression and the march to yet another world war, both the graphic works and the large-scale paintings of Rouault demonstrate a highly developed hieratic style used to convey a sense of inner harmony and balance in the midst of external disequilibrium. Gael Mooney and Stephen Schloesser lay out elements of this style in Rouault's circus works, from the abandoned *Cirque* (1930) through the *Cirque de l'Étoile filante* (published 1938) to *Divertissement* (published 1943). Rouault employed elements from both Byzantine and Romanesque periods for his formal arrangements; applied elements from ancient Egyptian sculpture and painting to bodily elongation and angular posture; and used elements of the Gothic theology of light, formulated by Abbot Suger, to produce a diffuse and anti-naturalist luminosity.

Thomas Epstein examines Rouault's association with André Suarès, a prolific writer associated with the *Nouvelle Revue Française* who has been largely forgotten. Epstein discusses Suarès's text for the *Passion* (1939), illustrated by Rouault and published by Vollard, and offers the reader assistance in unpacking Rouault's images in light of Suarès's text. Epstein also provides translations of two chapters from *Passion*, offering rare access to Suarès's message and method. Finally, Epstein discusses Suarès's early resistance to the burgeoning anti-Semitism of the 1930s and the disturbing indifference with which his warnings were received. After the German invasion of 1940, Suarès would spend four years successfully eluding the Gestapo.

V. 1940-1958. The penultimate illustrated folio that Rouault produced was *Divertissement* (1943), published in the midst of the war. The essays of Anne Davenport and Tara Ward offer directions for making this densely layered work more accessible. Davenport locates *Divertissement* within the overall project of its publisher, Tériade, whose periodical *Verve* experimented with attempts to provide unities of texts and images as well as of medievals and moderns. Using close textual analysis, Davenport traces Rouault's use of the medieval poet François Villon to create a deeply nationalistic call to resistance—a clarion yet cryptic call since *Divertissement* was published in occupied France. Ward also provides an account of "French resistance," this one in opposition to genealogical histories of the "modern" that were about to find their terminus or fulfillment across the Atlantic, in the Abstract Expressionism of postwar and Cold War New York. Rouault presents an alternative genealogy, one whose characters are not only French in nationality, but who were marginalized by the official academic arbiters of their time.

Stephan Dahme extends such consideration of the universal/particular (or abstract/concrete) contrast to all of Rouault's late work in the 1940s and 1950s. Rouault's pursuit of (universal) artistic autonomy had led him, early in his career, into conflict with (particular) religiously confessional voices of the day. Closely analyzing Rouault's late work, Dahme argues that the artist saw the two not only as compatible but as two aspects of a single project: the pursuit of artistic autonomy; and the quest for a God whose reality outruns any attempt at concrete conceptual limitation.

Three essays situate the final years of Rouault's life, the context in which his work was received a half-century ago with a nearly unimaginable enthusiasm. Since Bernard Doering sketches the relationship between Rouault and Jacques Maritain over nearly five decades, his essay could have been located at nearly any point in the catalogue. Placing it in the postwar era highlights the somewhat remarkable place Maritain occupied in early Cold War America. Doering concludes with Maritain's *Creative Intuition* (1953), the final fruit of many years of reflection on art and aesthetics, a preoccupation greatly indebted to the philosopher's relationship with the artist. Sheila Nowinski's overview of both the French Fourth Republic and the Catholic Church in the 1950s shows the deep fissures that underlay both. Rouault's stereotyped identity as a "Catholic artist" receives much-needed clarification and qualification. His art was being received within an institution that was bitterly divided from within during this period, when "modern religious art" in general became one among many sites of contest for arguments between proponents of *nouvelle théologie* and their adversaries. David Quigley considers the reception of Rouault from the other side of the Atlantic. Approaching the MoMA from the perspectives of institutional and urban history, Quigley traces the rapid rise and meteoric fall of Rouault's reputation within the context of New York City's self-understandings and self-fabrications. First, a prewar and immediate postwar context used the Modern (and Rouault) to build New York as Paris's rival for the center of modern art; next, both the Modern and the newly built United Nations complex were used to situate New York in the Eisenhower Cold War years as an icon of political democracy and individual freedom; finally, in the post-1968 Nixon years and beyond, New York City, associated with urban decay and political corruption, symbolizing broader American crises in authority during the late Vietnam war era and its postwar aftermath.

VI. 1963. *Mystic Masque* is fortunate to exhibit twelve variants of the *Sainte Face* from the

Rouault family's 1963 donation of *inachevés* to the Musée national d'Art moderne. Three essayists offer avenues of approach to this central figure in Rouault's work. James Keenan begins with a historical overview of the development of Veronica and her veil (Sudarium) as figures in antiquity and the Middle Ages. He then turns to a consideration of the image's function in the *Miserere*, suggesting that this graphic monument might function pedagogically. Observing that the veil has once again become a key cultural image due to Islam's greater visibility, Keenan locates the veil in present-day terms. Nora Possenti Ghiglia offers notes for a less historical and more contemplative reading of the *Sainte Face*. Drawing on a wide arrange of scriptural and literary texts (including Rouault's own), Possenti Ghiglia invites the reader to contemplate the various meanings of the face—the human face; the clown's face; Christ's face; the illuminated face; the face as site of compassion; the face as a sacramental. Finally, Roberto Goizueta reads the *Sainte Face* from the perspective of liberation theology. Noting that Rouault's depictions of the risen Christ occur only in moments of recognition—the imprint of Christ's face on the Sudarium being an iconic representative of all such moments—Goizueta reads Rouault through the lens of sacramentalism. The presence of Christ is here and now, still walking the road, still in the impoverished *faubourg*. However, since this Christ might appear "ugly" and unrecognizable as such to conventional vision, Goizueta concludes that perceiving a different kind of "beauty" presents a call to aesthetic conversion.

Among the many persons acknowledged in the director's preface to whom this exhibition is indebted, I would like to single out two institutions.

The first is the University of San Francisco. I am especially indebted to the University President, the Reverend Stephen Privett, S.J., University Chancellor, the Reverend John Lo Schiavo, S.J., and Dean of Arts and Science, Prof. Jennifer Turpin. My position as holder of the Lo Schiavo Chair in Catholic Thought, housed in the university's Lane Center for Catholic Studies and Social Thought, provided the necessary time and means to produce *Mystic Masque*. Without the Pacific coast's warm generosity, this Atlantic coast reality would still be but a dream.

The second is the Fondation Rouault in Paris. Our exhibition's profound debt to Georges Rouault's grandchildren, especially Messrs. Jean-Yves and Gilles Rouault, and Mme. Anne-Marie Agulhon, cannot be adequately acknowledged. Personally speaking, I would also like to remember and acknowledge the artist's daughter, the late Mlle. Isabelle Rouault. She received me with great generosity while I researched the Rouault archives for my dissertation more than a decade ago. Without her gracious reception at that time, this endeavor would not have been conceptualized, let alone realized. Mlle. Rouault's single-minded devotion to her father and his work was nonpareil. It is my fervent hope that she would be pleased with this fruition of the seeds that she planted.

Artist Isabelle Rouault standing beside a self-portrait of her father Georges Rouault (**no. 21**). Photo: by Ralph Crane / Time Life Pictures / Getty Images

Endnotes

1 Isaiah 11:3-4. *The Holy Bible containing the Old and New Testaments with the Apocryphal / Deuterocanonical Books. New Revised Standard Version* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1989). Hereafter NRSV.

2 Gustave Moreau, qtd. in Georges Rouault, *Souvenirs intimes*, 2d. ed. (Paris: E. Frapier, 1927) 42-43.

3 Georges Rouault, qtd. by Lars Erik Aström, *Expressen* (January 28, 1951); qtd. in Pierre Courthion, *Georges Rouault* (New York: H. N. Abrams, 1962) 358.

4 Georges Rouault, *Georges Rouault, forme, couleur, harmonie,* catalogue published for the Musée d'art moderne et contemporain de Strasbourg exhibition, 10 November 2006 to 18 March 2007, commissariat Fabrice Hergott (Strasbourg: Musées de Strasbourg, 2006) 238.

5 Voltaire, Preface and Notes to "Poem on the Lisbon Disaster," Voltaire, *Œuvres*, ed. Louis Moland, 52 vols. (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1877-85) 9:564-79; in Voltaire, *Candide and Related Texts*, trans. David Wootton (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2000) 98.

6 For translation, see Bernard Doering in this volume.

7 Isaiah 29: 15-16. NRSV. For Rouault's Catholicism as inversion, see essay by James Keenan in present volume.

8 For extended reflections on this theme, see Roberto Goizueta essay in the present volume.

9 For an authoritative presentation of all these illustrated books, both published and unfinished at the time of Vollard's death, see François Chapon, *Le Livre des livres de Rouault = The Illustrated Books of Rouault* (Monaco: A. Sauret; Paris: M. Trinckvel, 1992).

10 For accessible recent reprints of three of these volumes, see Georges Rouault, *Cirque de l'étoile filante: eaux-fortes originales et dessins gravés sur bois de Georges Rouault* (Paris: Cerf: Fondation Georges Rouault, 2005); Andrè Suarès and Georges Rouault, *Passion* (Paris: Cerf, 2005); Georges Rouault, *Le Miserere de Georges Rouault* (Paris: Cerf, 2004).

11 For the most recent compilation of Rouault's writings, see Hergott, *Forme, couleur, harmonie* 257.

12 Maritain continued: "Of course he never wrote sonnets; he never limited himself to any set form of versification. The rhymes and assonance came to him haphazardly. He took liberal advantage of the freedom of modern or any other kind of poetry that he needed. He eliminated for instance nearly every article. The style of his poems with which we were familiar resembled that of the popular ballad, that of a milder Villon." Raïssa Maritain, *We Have Been Friends Together, and Adventures in Grace: The Memoirs of Raïssa Maritain*, trans. Julie Kernan (Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1961) 196. I am grateful to Virginia Reinburg for directing me to this passage.

13 For *Soliloques*, see Schloesser, "1939-1958: Perpetual *Peregrinus*," in this volume.

14 For Rouault's biography, see Courthion (1962); for the catalogues raisonnés of Rouault's graphic and painted works, see respectively: François Chapon and Isabelle Rouault, *Rouault: œuvre gravé*, 2 vols. (Monte-Carlo: Éditions André Sauret, 1978); Bernard Dorival and Isabelle Rouault, *Rouault: l'œuvre peint*, 2 vols. (Monte-Carlo: Éditions André Sauret, 1988); for editions of the *Miserere* that reproduce previously unpublished texts from Rouault's archives, see *Le Miserere de Georges Rouault* (2005); and Rouault, *Miserere*, new edition enl. with texts and commentaries (Paris: Editions le Léopard d'or; Tokyo: Zauho Press, 1991).

15 Bertrand Leclair, "Du tableau au texte: Analyse de *Le Vieux Roi* de Georges Rouault (1937)," Plato, *Apologie de Socrate* trans. and annotated by Anissa Castel-Bouchouchi; essay by Bertrand Leclair (Paris: Gallimard, 2008), 55-63, see p. 62. I am grateful to Gilles Rouault for directing me to this essay.

16 I am deeply grateful to my colleague Kevin Newmark for this and other invaluable assistance with translations. The passage referenced is Rouault's poetic verse on Notre-Dame de la Fin-des-Terres: "*Notre Dame de la fin des Terres, je / vous ai vue honorée, avant que votre / modeste chapelle ne fut ensablée…*"; qtd. in Dorival and Rouault, *l'Œuvre peint* 2:52. See Schloesser, "Notes on the *Miserere* plates exhibited in *Mystic Masque*," in this volume.

PART I: 1871–1901

1871–1901: Realism, Symbolism, Mystic Modernism

Stephen Schloesser

For ages, when philosophers talked about the core of man they referred to it as his "essence," something fixed in his nature, deep down, some special quality or substance. But nothing like it was ever found; man's peculiarity still remained a dilemma. The reason it was never found, as Erich Fromm put it in an excellent discussion, was that there was no essence, that the essence of man is really his paradoxical nature, the fact that he is half animal and half symbolic.[1]

1871: Rouault's First War—A Civil War[2]

Georges Rouault's lifelong ambivalence toward authority (he both craved official recognition and reviled the officials who granted or withheld it) can probably be traced back as far as his dramatic birth in Belleville.[3] A one-time village that had been annexed by Paris, Belleville lay in the city's eastern-most working-class district, a neighborhood known for its extreme-left politics and for its location as the last and most bitter holdout of the Paris Commune[4]. Unfamiliar to most Americans today, the Commune was much on the minds of Americans in the spring of 1871. France's civil war—a class war—seemed both to echo the recent trauma of the American Civil War (1861-1865) and the New York City draft riots (1863) as well as prefigure class wars that lay ahead.[5]

The upheaval had begun with French Emperor Napoleon III's disastrous decision to take bait dangled by Prussia's Otto von Bismarck.[6] Bismarck knew

Fig. 1. Honoré Daumier, *Those on their way to die salute you! (2 Sept. 1870).* Courtesy Bibliothèque nationale de France

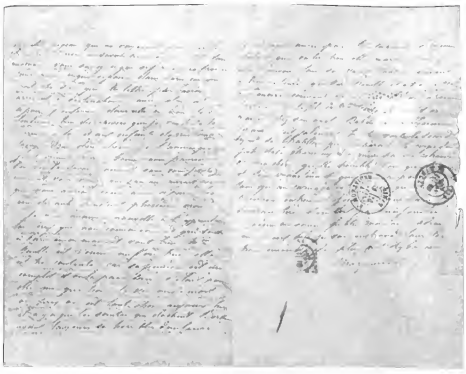


Fig 2. Anonymous autograph letter signed to the Baronne de Doazan, Paris, 4 January 1871, describing life during the Prussian siege of Paris, very likely sent by balloon post. Boston Public Library, Ms.Fr.167. Photo: Stephen Vedder

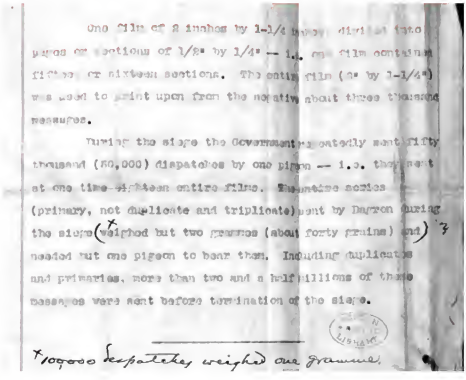


Fig 3. Ministry of the Post and Telegraph: typewritten account of microfilms for transmission sent by pigeon-post during the Prussian siege of Paris, 1870-71. Boston Public Library, G.P870.F84P. Photo: Stephen Vedder

that one way to lure southern Catholic Bavaria into joining a unified (largely Protestant) German state would be to provoke a war with a common ancient enemy. Napoleon succumbed and led France's Second Empire into a quick debacle. Shortly after the war began in July 1870, Napoleon was captured at the Battle of Sedan (September 2) and deposed two days later. In *Ceux qui vont mourir te saluent! (2 Sept. 1870)* (**fig. 1**), published on the day of the Sedan disaster, Honoré Daumier captured the moment with a bitter pathos. A throng of French youth salutes a statue of Marianne, the revolutionary female personification of France, on their way to die at the front.

Two days later, Napoleon's Second Empire passed into history as the Government of National Defense proclaimed the Third Republic. On September 12, as the Prussians advanced on Paris, a delegation of the government took refuge in Tours. On September 18, the Prussians surrounded Paris and severed all railway lines leading into and out of the city. The next morning, all remaining overhead telegraph wires were cut; one week later (September 27), a secret telegraph cable lying in the Seine River was located and cut. Throughout the long siege, the Prussians allowed no private letters to be brought into Paris, not even by authorized emissaries.[7]

After a number of failed attempts using other means—including balloons, sheepdogs, and zinc balls floated down the Seine—the Post and Telegraph resorted to the use of carrier pigeons for carrying thousands of messages into Paris. Even in the most successful months of September through December 1870, only a small fraction of released pigeons arrived in Paris safely. As the winter weather worsened, the situation became even more dire: of the sixty-five pigeons released between January and February 1871, only six arrived.[8] Two documents conserved by the Boston Public Library bring this precarious period back to life. An anonymous letter describing life during the siege (dated Paris, 4 January 1871, and addressed to the Baronne de Doazan) vividly shows the thinness of the paper required to meet the realities of pigeon post (**fig. 2**). A second document, typewritten in English (presumably in 1871 or shortly thereafter) describes in detail the sending of microfilmed documents by pigeon-post

Fig. 4. Honoré Daumier, *Horrified by her Heritage*, 11 January 1871. Boston Public Library,

Fig. 5 Honoré Daumier, [Massacre on] *Rue Transnonain 15 April 1834*, Robert D. Farber University Archives & Special Collections Department, Brandeis University

Fig. 6 Édouard Manet, *Guerre Civile* (Civil War), 1871-73. Lithograph, image: 15 5/8 x 20 in. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Gift of W. G. Russell Allen, 1923. 23.1323

(**fig. 3**). In addition to demonstrating how desperately isolated Paris was during the siege, these documents offer a curious link to Georges Rouault: according to at least one version of the family lore, his father and grandfather had to be called home from their jobs at the Post and Telegraph the day Rouault was born.[9]

The humiliation and horror felt by the French as the old turned into the new year can be seen in Daumier's lithograph, *Épouvantée de l'Héritage*, published on January 11, 1871 (**fig 4**). As Paris endured one of the bitterest winters on record, the siege brought dangerously low temperatures.[10] The lack of caloric intake made the situation worse. In November, all food animals had been requisitioned except for horses; by mid-December, horses were also requisitioned. Urban legends proliferated about patriotic citizens "needing" to eat rats and the "necessity" of shooting exotic zoo elephants, Castor and Pollux, for food on December 30.[11] The legends were an attempt to give some kind of heroic meaning to a disaster. Flour was requisitioned in December and bread rationed beginning on the 19th of January. The situation continued to worsen:

> The prices of all unrationed foodstuffs rose so steeply that the poor of the city faced the serious prospect of starvation. Reflecting the accelerating rarity of basic items, the price of milk increased fourfold, that of butter by eight, of eggs by fourteen, and of potatoes by ten. Certain staples of the French diet began to disappear early on: cheese, butter (replaced by horsemeat grease), beef, and lamb, for example. For much of the population, normal fare became unattainable. Vegetables and milk became unavailable, and cat and dog butchers proliferated in the grimmer parts of town.[12]

Fig. 7. Burning of the Hôtel de Ville, Paris, May 1871; from Victor Fournel, *Paris et ses ruines en mai 1871*, 3rd ed. (Paris: H. Charpentier, 1873). Boston Public Library Rare Books, 26.173. Photo: Stephen Vedder

Fig. 8. Charred Ruins of the Hôtel de Ville, Paris, May 1871. Photo: Gernsheim Collection, Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin

On January 28, 1871, Jules Favre, Minister of Foreign Affairs, acted against the wishes of the Léon Gambetta, Minister of War and the Interior, and signed an armistice with Bismarck: "It was, quite simply, a capitulation."[13] (Favre was the grandfather of Jacques Maritain who would become a close friend of Rouault.[14]) Working-class Parisians, having borne the brunt of the siege and seeing yet another bourgeois government coming into being, resented being left behind politically as they had in the revolutions of 1830 and 1848. Daumier's depiction of the massacre on the *Rue Transnonain 15 April 1834* still stands out as the iconic memory of this felt betrayal (**fig. 5**). The Prussians began to relax restrictions in mid-February.

In March 1871, rejecting the authority of Versailles's provisional government to act on their behalf, the workers formed their own "democratic and social republic," the Paris Commune, which would last until the final week of May.[15] During the bloody week (*la semaine sanglante*), the Versailles government set Paris aflame by raining bombshells from cannons located on the bluffs of Montmartre (the site of the present-day Sacré-Coeur Basilica).[16] In *Guerre Civile* (**fig. 6**), Édouard Manet offers a close-up view of executed Communards lying dead at a barricade. The colorful lithographs in Victor Fournel's *Paris et ses ruines en mai 1871*—especially that of the burning of the Hôtel de Ville (**fig. 7**)—vividly recall the devastation, as do the sober photographs taken of the ruined city and massacred Communard corpses (**figs. 8** and **9**). In its final awful days, Communard mobs took hostages, dragging them through the streets from their prison to Belleville, "shot in screaming chaos, 'like rabbits,' as one witness put it, running in all directions…one body had been peppered with sixty-nine bullets."[17] Since some of these hostages were clergy (including the Archbishop of Paris, several Jesuits, and other priests), the civil war became a religious war as they were executed in a supreme act of desperation on Friday, May 26.[18]

The following day, Saturday, May 27, 1871, Georges Rouault was born into this crucible. By then, the Commune's penultimate day, the only remaining resistance against the Versailles government was in his own Belleville as well as the neighboring impoverished district of Ménilmontant (location of Père-Lachaise cemetery, site of the final massacre at the Wall of the Fédérés[19]). The bloody repression by the Versailles government (including immediate executions without trials) transformed Belleville into "a veritable slaughterhouse." One English journalist's recollection of that Saturday reported seeing "around 60 men shot in the same place and at the same time as women."[20] Manet's *La Barricade* (**fig. 10**) captures just one of the numerous horrifying episodes.[21]

Seeking refuge from the falling bombshells, Rouault's mother went down into the cellar to give birth while his grandmother ran out into this carnage in search of a doctor or midwife. As she

Fig. 9. Unclaimed corpses of executed Communards, Paris, May 1871. Photo: Gernsheim Collection, Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin

wandered the burning streets, she heard neighbors crying out, "Citizen! Help bury the dead!" Finding neither doctor nor midwife, she returned just in time to watch a shell hit the caretaker's apartment and shatter the dwelling. Rouault's father and grandfather were quickly summoned from their work at the Post and Telegraph. Fearing the worst, they were amazed to see that somehow both mother and newborn had survived in the cellar.[22] Young Georges received his nickname: *Obu* ("shell").

The Commune was definitively defeated by the Versailles government the following day, May 28, 1871. Rouault's birth would not be able to be recorded until June 2 due to the still-smoldering local city hall [*mairie*]. His baptism would have to wait even longer: he was baptized in the heart of Paris in the medieval church of Saint-Leu, ancient site of the baptism of François Villon (ca. 1431-1463).[23] Although the Commune had arrested the pastor and locked the church tight, bombs exploded in its interior had wreaked significant damage.[24] Rouault was baptized in the rubble.

Rouault would later trace his vision back to these events: "I believe [...] that in the context of the massacres, fires and horrors, I have retained (from the cellar in which I was born) in my eyes and in my mind the fleeting matter which good fire fixes and incrusts."[25] His work, at least in part, shares a family resemblance with other post-Commune commemorations of trauma.[26]

Fig. 10. Édouard Manet, *La Barricade*, 1871, lithograph, 18 15/16 x 13 3/4 in.

II. 1871–1885: An Anti-sentimentalist Sentimental Education

From his working-class origins, Rouault received not only his fundamental sympathies but also an artistic and aesthetic preference for realism.[27] His maternal grandfather, Alexandre Champdavoine, had a penchant for collecting inexpensive prints, and Rouault breathed in this politically charged air from an early age. "Very young, in the face of reality, I was infatuated with Daumier. My grandfather (a great admirer of Manet) went along the quays [of the Seine] gleaning reproductions of painters he loved. Daumier formed the foundation of his modest purchases; he knew that he was a misunderstood painter."[28] The grandson was drawn to the same innovative artists: Daumier, Manet, and Courbet.

Rouault's inheritance from Daumier can be seen in many subjects. Both shared a keen sense of the cruelties committed by elite society and political authorities (cf. *Rue Transnonain*, *Ceux qui vont mourir*, and *Épouvantée de l'Héritage*); a sympathy for the fugitive, those in exile, and the homeless (including wandering circus players—e.g., *Le*

Fig. 11. Honoré Daumier, *Saltimbanques Changing Place*, ca. 1865, chalk and watercolor on paper, 12 9/16 x 15 7/8 in. Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, CT. The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1928.273

Fig. 12. Honoré Daumier, *"It is true you lost your case, but you must have enjoyed ..."* Boston Public Library D1371

Fig. 13. Honoré Daumier, *Narcissus,* Boston Public Library D947

Fig. 14. Honoré Daumier, *Menelaus Conqueror,* Boston Public Library D925

Fig. 15. Édouard Manet, *Gypsies*, 1862, etching, 12 5/8 x 9 7/16 in. Harvard University Art Museums, Fogg Art Museum, Gift of Paul J. Sachs, M1004

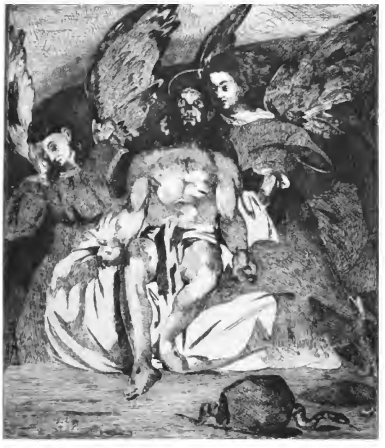


Fig. 16. Édouard Manet, *Dead Christ with Angels*, 1866-67, etching and aquatint, sheet: 17 13/16 x 14 7/16 in. Harvard University Art Museums, Fogg Art Museum, Loan from Marjorie B. Cohn and Martin Cohn in memory of Kermit S. Champa, 8.2007

déplacement des saltimbanques [**fig. 11**]); and a delight in satirizing bourgeois society and what it holds in esteem. Perhaps the most important and lasting connection is Daumier's work devoted to the *gens de justice* ("men of justice") in the judiciary system: judges and lawyers on the one hand; widows, orphans, and the unjustly condemned on the other. Daumier's *Vous avez perdu votre procès c'est vrai…* (**fig. 12**) bitterly satirizes a lawyer's interaction with a widow and orphan: "It's true you lost your case" he says, immediately adding (in the spirit of Narcissus), "but you must have had a pleasurable experience in hearing me plead it." With his nose held high in the air the lawyer provides a superb exemplar of the artist's satirical genre as well as his skepticism about the system's "justice."

Finally, Daumier's caricatures of the legends of antiquity satirized the art establishment itself. Published between December 1841 and January 1843, Daumier's *Histoire ancienne* series allowed him to "make a mockery of the entire conformist arsenal of Academicism's neo-classical painting." In the eyes of Baudelaire, Daumier also gave "the best paraphrase of the notorious line: 'Who will deliver us from the Greeks and the Romans?'"[29] Two of these parodies in the present exhibition— *Narcisse* and *Ménélas Vainqueur* (**figs. 13** and **14**)—call to mind Mozart's lines in Peter Schaffer's *Amadeus*: "Come on now, be honest. Wouldn't you all rather listen to your hairdressers than Hercules? Or Horatius? Or Orpheus? All those old bores! people so lofty they sound as if they shit marble!"[30]

Rouault's realist sympathies were also nourished by Manet. Like Daumier, Manet sympathetically represented those who wander without fixed abodes, e.g., *Gypsies* (**fig. 15**). But Manet's fascination with the figure of Christ provides a curious twist to this "realist" genealogy. His landmark painting, *The Dead Christ with Angels*, was exhibited at the Salon of 1864, and reproduced afterward in lithographic prints (**fig. 16**). (Rouault directly quoted this work in his *Miserere*. See *Le juste, comme le bois de santal* [**no. 27tt**].) Although Manet was not a believer, he depicted Christ in a realist manner that evoked the viewer's sympathy and would have been in line with a religiosity influenced by mid-century liberalism and socialism.

Fig. 17. Édouard Manet, *Christ aux outrages (Christ Mocked)*, 1860-65, pen and brown ink, brush and brown wash over graphite. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Arthur Tract Cabot Fund, Centennial gifts of Mrs. Thomas Card and Charles C. Cunningham, Jr., 1968. 68.755

Fig. 18. Rembrandt, *Christ Healing the Sick* ("The Hundred Guilder Print") Boston Public Library

Even more significant in relation to Rouault is Manet's *Christ aux outrages* (**fig. 17**), an ink study done as a preparation for the painting completed in 1865.[31] Rouault would use this same title—"Christ mocked"—for a number of works throughout his career (e.g., **nos. 6** and **26n**). The scene is intimately connected to the judicial system, crystallizing the moment in which Christ is taunted and parodied by those who judge only by appearances — and who, as a result, judge incorrectly.

Rouault's grandfather also collected prints by Rembrandt. When looking at Rouault's first works (see *Le Chemin du Calvaire* and *Job*, **nos. 1** and **2**), it is difficult to imagine that these are not conscious imitations of Rembrandt's semi-circular arrangements of crowds surrounding the central figure. The device can be clearly seen in Rembrandt's depiction of *Christ Healing the Sick ("The Hundred Guilder Print")* (**fig. 18**). Rembrandt's exaggerated use of chiarascuro would also influence Rouault's trademark contrasts of bright colors silhouetted with dark lines.

Rouault's childhood passion for art was echoed by a precocity in literary abilities, and from a very early age he enthusiastically read works by Goethe, Molière, Racine, Spinoza, and Voltaire.[32] Rouault's father was opposed to the strictness of Catholic schools and first enrolled his son in a Protestant school. However, he soon withdrew him after a punishment he judged to be abusive. (Very likely this is the source of one of Rouault's most entertaining grotesques in this exhibition, *The Pedagogue*, **no. 15**, discussed below.) Additionally, this was a period of great contests between church and state (represented by Minister of Public Instruction Jules Ferry) over education: in 1880, the Jesuits and other congregations were expelled; that same year, the Camille See bill established secondary schools for girls; in 1881 and 1882 the Ferry Laws made primary education free, mandatory, and laicist. Rouault's father sent him to a laicist republican school in Paris's fifteenth *arrondissement*, an atmosphere that would have amplified sentiments already imbibed from Voltaire, Courbet, Daumier, and Monet.

On June 1, 1885, Rouault's grandfather took him to see the funeral procession of the republican hero Victor Hugo.[33] Between the catafalque lying in state at the black-draped Arc de Triomphe and the official entombment at the Pantheon, Hugo's funeral crossed the city including a route along the Boulevard Saint-Germain-des-Prés. Maurice Barrès described the event: "The Arc de Triomphe is the sign of our justifiable pride; the Panthéon is the laboratory of our good works.... From the Étoile to the Panthéon, Victor Hugo made his way, escorted

by the crowd. From the pride of France he moved to France's heart."[34] This spectacle, one of the most monumental events in modern French history, cannot help but have made a profound impact on the deeply impressionable adolescent artist. Later that year, his grandfather died, leaving him bereft in numerous ways. "My grandfather died when I was about fifteen," he later recalled. "He was my sole spiritual support until Gustave Moreau."[35]

By the time Georges Rouault reached his fourteenth birthday, he had received a sentimental education that was anti-sentimentalist—republican, laicist, and socialist—both formally (in terms of art, literature, and schooling) and informally (in terms of socio-cultural milieu). Thirty-five years later a critic would conclude from Rouault's left-leaning sympathies that he could not possibly be a religious believer, reasoning that his paintings of Christ were "more tormented, more human, and more true because the one who painted them does not have the soul of a believer."[36] Rouault's early anti-sentimental realism would go underground during the fin-de-siècle, but it would resurface with a fury after the new century's birth.

Fig. 19. Martin Schongauer (German, about 1430–1491) *The Bearing of the Cross*, engraving, sheet: 6 7/16 x 4 3/4 in. Private Collection

III. 1885–1892: Neo/Medieval Glimmers

In that same year of 1885, a two-day school excursion to Le Havre and Rouen allowed the adolescent Rouault to discover medieval art in a way he had not previously done. This coincided with the first moments of his education and work as an artisan, a neo-medieval self-perception that he would preserve for years to come (cf. his self-portraits from the 1920s, **nos. 21** and **22e**).[37] He was placed in an apprenticeship with the stained-glass maker and repairman, Marius Tamoni, with whom he worked for two years. During this same period, Rouault took evening courses at the École des Arts décoratifs. In 1886, Rouault went to work in the atelier of stained glass-maker Émile Hirsch, receiving a wage of fifty centimes a week. Happily for Rouault's crosstown commutes, the family moved into the heart of the city (240B Boulevard Saint-Germain) so that his father could be closer to his place of work as well. In 1890, thanks to financial assistance provided by his mother's taking on extra work, Rouault was able to enter the École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts in the atelier of Jules-Élie Delaunay.

The following year, Rouault met a Benedictine monk named Fr. Vallée. Vallée made a strong impression on the twenty-year-old and Rouault began studying the catechism with him. This is the same year that Rouault gave as the date for his *Le Chemin du Calvaire* (1891, **no. 1**), one of only seven works listed in his *catalogue raisonné* prior to 1892.[38] (Additionally, this is the only of those works done in oil, the other six being pencil drawings.) Although it is possible that the work was actually finished as late as 1896—the artist himself later seems to have indicated this on a photograph—it would seem that, at least at some time, Rouault had wanted to designate the road to Calvary as the first oil painting of his oeuvre, i.e., as completed in 1891, the year he began to study catechism and the year prior to studying with Gustave Moreau.[39]

As a pictorial explication du texte—the literary text here (as with nearly all of Rouault's first decade of work) being a scriptural text—*Le Chemin*

du Calvaire displays Rouault's youthful conformation to the conventions of the Academic Salon style as well as his imitation of Rembrandt's arrangements of crowds. Because most of the figures have been left unfinished, it is difficult to say with certainty who exactly is depicted. It would seem that the figure bowing toward Christ is Simon of Cyrene being coerced by the soldiers to help carry the cross. From the halos gracing the heads of two figures to the right it would also seem likely that one is Christ's mother, Mary, and the other is Saint Veronica holding out her veil.

The story of Christ's encounter with Veronica and her veil was deeply-rooted in piety and tradition from the Middle Ages onward, and it was the subject of numerous representations throughout the centuries[40] (**fig. 19**). However, the telescoping of these two events—the coercion of Simon of Cyrene and the meeting of Veronica—had a much more recent origin: *The Dolorous Passion of Christ* by Anne Catherine Emmerich (1774-1824). Emmerich's "visions" were assembled (along with forged material) by Clemens Brentano (1778-1842), the Rhineland Romantic poet and novelist, who started publishing them in 1833 (nearly a decade after Emmerich's death). As the *Passion* was a publishing phenomenon throughout the rest of the nineteenth century, it is very possible that Rouault would have come across it on his own. But given the coincidence in 1891 of meeting Fr. Vallée and producing *Le Chemin du Calvaire*, it is also probable that Rouault was alerted to the book by Vallée.

Regardless of how Rouault might have come across this work, it would have had enormous appeal for him insofar as it shared a number of his own attitudes regarding appearances, society's elite and marginal, and the centrality of compassion. Emmerich's "vision" first records the entrance of Simon of Cyrene thus:

> Many respectable looking persons who were on their way to the Temple stopped, and exclaimed compassionately [*s'écrièrent avec compassion*]: 'Look at that poor man, he is certainly dying!' but his enemies showed no compassion. This fall caused a fresh delay, as our Lord could not stand up again, and the Pharisees said to the soldiers: "We shall never get him to the place of execution alive, if you do not find some one to carry his cross."[41]

At this point, the soldiers perceived by Simon's dress "that he was a gardener, a pagan of the lower class [*un jardinier, un païen de la classe inférieure*], seized him, and ordered him to assist Jesus in carrying his cross."[42] Emmerich continues:

> Simon was much annoyed, and expressed the greatest vexation at being obliged to carry Jesus's cross, because of the disgust provoked in him by all his bruises and his clothing soiled with blood [*toutes ses meurtrissures et ses vêtements souillés de sang*]; but Jesus wept, and cast such a pleading look upon him that he was touched, and instead of continuing to show reluctance, helped him to rise, while the executioners fastened one arm of the cross on his shoulders, and he walked behind our Lord, thus relieving him in a great measure from its weight; and when all was arranged, the procession moved forward.[43]

Emmerich's account might explain why the person directly next to Christ in Rouault's *Le Chemin au Calvaire* appears to be looking not forward (as one would expect of someone shouldering the cross) but rather turned backward and looking at Christ.

Emmerich directly follows this moment up with the encounter with Veronica:

> Among the people who gathered at the Temple from all directions were several who distanced themselves out of view of Jesus for fear of defiling themselves [*de peur de se souiller*]; others, less pharisaical, showed themselves to be accessible to compassion [*accessibles à la compassion*].[44]…[A] woman of majestic appearance, holding a young girl by the hand, came out, and walked up to the very head of the procession. Seraphia was the name of the brave woman who thus dared to confront the enraged

multitude; she was the wife of Sirach, one of the councillors belonging to the Temple, and was afterwards known by the name of Veronica, which name was given from the words *vera icon* (true portrait), to commemorate her brave conduct on this day.[45]

...Those who were marching at the head of the procession tried to push her back; but she made her way through the mob, the soldiers, and the archers, reached Jesus, fell on her knees before him, and said, "Permit me to wipe the face of my Lord." At the same time, she took from her shoulders a beautiful shroud of fine linen [*un beau suaire de laine fine*] and presented it to Jesus, conforming to the usage established in Palestine to give a testimonial of sympathy to fatigued voyagers [*témoignage de sympathie aux vaoyageurs fatigués*], to the sick, and to afflicted persons. The Savior took the shroud in his left hand, wiped his bleeding face, and returned it with thanks. Seraphia kissed it, and put it under her cloak against her heart.... Both the Pharisees and the guards were greatly exasperated, not only by the sudden halt, but much more by the public testimony of veneration which was thus paid to Jesus, and they revenged themselves by striking and abusing him, while Seraphia returned in haste to her house.[46]

...No sooner did she reach her room than she placed the woollen veil on a table, and fell almost senseless on her knees. A friend who entered the room a short time after, found her thus kneeling, with the child weeping by her side, and saw, to his astonishment, the bloody countenance of our Lord imprinted upon the veil, a perfect likeness, although heartrending and painful to look upon. He roused Seraphia, and pointed to the veil. She again knelt down before it, and exclaimed through her tears, "Now I shall indeed leave all with a happy heart, for my Lord has left me a testimony of love [*un gage de son amour*]."[47]

The leitmotif of compassion—that shown by both Simon and Veronica—would clearly have resonated with Rouault's own religiosity. Moreover, Veronica's ethical compassion entails an epistemological moment of revelation. Like biblical figures who must change their names to signify that an experience has created a new identity (e.g., Abram becomes Abraham, Saul becomes Paul), Seraphia too becomes identified with this moment: "Called Veronica, from *vera icon* (true portrait), because of what she did this day."[48]

This iconographic moment—*et Véronique au tendre lin*—will return and become the keystone of Rouault's work and vision, especially as summarized in the *Miserere*. In this first oil painting at the age of twenty, Rouault laid out one of his most enduring leitmotifs, one whose popularity stretches from medieval pilgrims wayfaring the Chemin St Jacques-de-Compostelle (Santiago de Compostela) through Jacques Callot's seventeenth-century bohemians and gypsies up to Jack Kerouac's 1950s Beats: *sur le chemin* (on the road).

IV. 1892–1898: Symbolist Literary Painting

Later that year, Delaunay died on September 5, less than one year after Rouault's entrance into the École des Beaux-Arts. His death would prove decisive for Rouault's life since Delaunay's successor, Gustave Moreau, was named professor on January 1, 1892. Rouault entered Moreau's atelier in March.

By 1892, Moreau's status as the representative of symbolist painting was settled. Eight years earlier, his paintings had played a central role in Joris-Karl Huysmans's novel *À rebours* (*Against Nature*, 1884). Moreau's *Salomé Dancing Before Herod* (1876) and *Apparition* (1876) were key works for Jean Floressas des Esseintes, the hero of *À rebours*, and Huysmans framed his decadent interpretation of them with great detail in the novel's fifth chapter.[49] Jean Moréas's "symbolist" *Manifesto* (1886) served to unify the practices of various writers, artists,

and musicians (e.g., Huysmans and Stéphane Mallarmé, Moreau and Odilon Redon, Richard Wagner and soon Claude Debussy) by defining a common, if over-simplified, practice: to "clothe the Idea in a perceptible form."[50] Moreau's pictorial representations of mythological and scriptural texts ideally exemplified symbolism's emphasis on interrelating different art forms.[51] The more general notion that visual and musical arts can represent (or "suggest") the non-representable by means of exegeting anti-realistic "literary texts"—mythical, classical, biblical, and other exotica—would have great appeal for Rouault who was passionate about both visual and literary arts.[52]

Moreau brought his students to the Louvre every Sunday morning. Although he did not disparage the "modernists," he met with his students in front of "primitives" like Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665) and Claude Lorrain (ca. 1600-1682). Rouault reminisced: "('There are moments,' he used to say, 'when you would give your all for a bit of Rembrandt's mud.') He urged us to study certain very pure, very stark primitives, rather than some of the more conventional Raphaels."[53] The influence of Rembrandt is clearly seen in Rouault's *Job* (1892, **no. 2**) which bears an inscription in his own hand: "First sketch in the atelier of Gustave Moreau." The somber hues and the semi-circular arrangement of the three friends surrounding Job sunk in misery echo the Dutch master's depictions of Christ surrounded by crowds, e.g., *Christ Healing the Sick* (**fig. 18**).

In his painting of *Job* Rouault once again prefigured a leitmotif central to the rest of his life's work: *mis*judgment. The three "friends" surrounding Job blame him for the ills that have come to him, *mis*interpreting these misfortunes as justified punishment for some sin that he has committed. Job, however, maintains his righteousness and refuses to be swayed by the theodicies proposed by these theologians. After awhile, God reprimands the three friends for their pretensions to certitude and their consequent unjust judgments of Job.

As for Job himself, God simply enumerates the works of creation and asks where Job was when they were brought into being. Job acknowledges his inability to respond:

> Therefore I have uttered what I
> did not understand,
> things too wonderful for me,
> which I did not know.
> ...
> I had heard of you by the hearing
> of the ear,
> but now my eye sees you;
> therefore I despise myself,
> and repent in dust and ashes.[54]

The final lesson is simple: human beings must know their place in the universe and maintain a certain degree of epistemological modesty.

Moreau encouraged his students' absorption of literary works by giving them access to his personal library. Rouault became an ardent reader of both William Shakespeare and Charles Baudelaire. (Later in life he kept copies of Baudelaire's *Le Spleen de Paris* and *Les Fleurs du mal* next to his bed.[55]) One of Baudelaire's first poems that Rouault would have read utilizes Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth to illustrate his theory of the "ideal." Baudelaire, for whom the "ideal" and "spleen" are dialectically intertwined, reasons that his "ideal" flower must necessarily be profoundly evil. The "flower that is like my red ideal," writes Baudelaire, the only flower that can fill

> What such a heart profound as Hades needs
> Is you, lady Macbeth, strong for dire deeds,
> Aeschylean dream, reborn where Austers
> blast;[56]

The "Aeschylean dream" refers to Clytemnestra who kills Agamemnon in retribution for his having sacrificed their daughter, Iphigeneia. As for Lady Macbeth, Baudelaire takes his cue from Shakespeare's lines in which she counsels her husband by distinguishing between semblance and reality:

> To beguile the time,
> Look like the time; bear welcome in your
> eye,
> Your hand, your tongue: look like the
> innocent flower,

But be the serpent under't.[57]

It was precisely the ambiguous interplay between outward appearances and unseen meanings that made Baudelaire central to the Catholic Revivalist movement in this heyday of republican scientific positivism.[58]

In 1893, shortly before turning twenty-two, Rouault passed the essay contest for the Prix de Rome and entered the competition on March 31. His submission was *Samson tournant la meule* (1893, **nos. 3** and **4**), a large-format painting in the academic salon style. The chosen scene allowed Rouault to organize a crowd—a crowd of Philistines jeering Samson—in a circular manner again echoing Rembrandt. His later reminiscence suggests that he had also quite intentionally imitated the Flemish "primitives" that Moreau had directed his students to study at the Louvre. "My *Samson* with all its servants' and soldiers' mugs looking like those of Hieronymous Bosch frightened the jury. One professor even shook his fist at the canvas."[59] In the end, Rouault lost the grand prize.

Fig. 20. Georges Rouault, *Child Jesus among the Doctors*, 1894, oil on canvas, 57 ½ x 44 7/8 in. Musée d'Unterlinden, Colmar. Photo courtesy Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris.

Yet once again, this early work's subject matter contains two key themes that would endure throughout Rouault's life: blindness and slavery (or forced labor). The painting represents a chilling moment in the Bible: after Delilah the Philistine has betrayed Samson and cut his hair, he loses his strength and becomes vulnerable to his enemies. "So the Philistines seized him," recounts the book of *Judges*, "and gouged out his eyes. They brought him down to Gaza and bound him with bronze shackles; and he ground at the mill in the prison."[60] Ironically, however, Samson's blindness would lead to his greatest triumph. When the Philistines' "hearts were merry, they said, 'Call Samson, and let him entertain us.' So they called Samson out of the prison, and he performed for them." Because he was blind, Samson was allowed to balance himself between two pillars both of which he then pushed against. "He strained with all his might; and the house fell on the lords and all the people who were in it. So those he killed at his death were more than those he had killed during his life."[61] Painted in 1894, this image of gouged eyes paradoxically leading to greater strength might have been inspired by a line written (and probably uttered) by Gustave Moreau around this time: "God gouges out the eyes of a bird so that it might sing better."[62]

In 1894, Rouault painted *L'Enfant Jésus parmi les docteurs* (**fig. 20**). It is difficult, at least in retrospect, not to see this as a self-portrait, or at least a self-identification between Rouault and the young Jesus. The scene recounted is from the Gospel of Luke. The parents of Jesus have lost him in the crowds in Jerusalem and frantically search for him. "After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard Jesus were astonished at his understanding and his answers."[63] Rouault once again lays out a central figure surrounded by a crowd (although more distant now as they recede with perspective provided by Romanesque arches). The figure is the boy Jesus, standing in the Temple court before a panel of three seated "doctors" [*docteurs*] of the Jewish law. These theologians both echo the mistaken theologians in *Job* (1892) as well as foreshadow Rouault's later depiction of judges (**nos. 46g** and **54**)—indeed, the figure on the left wears a red robe and black hat that unmistakably echo a French magistrate.

However, instead of the "amazement" and "awe" spoken of in the scriptural version of this moment, the middle figure sternly raises a pointed figure as if in reprimand.

Given the context of the scene, the details of its fate in competition are rich with irony. In July that year, Rouault entered the painting in the Concours Chenavard. The original jury verdict gave the first prize—"a windfall of three thousand francs"—to "a second-rate canvas by one of [Jean-Léon] Gérôme's pupils." The other students united in protest and the verdict was set aside. Léon Lehmann, perhaps Rouault's closest friend throughout his life, later recalled: "The reaction in the three painting ateliers was so great that the authorities were obliged to capitulate the same day. A specially composed jury drawn from the Institut was constituted, with the result that Rouault won the prize."[64] Given the contempt that Rouault would express later in life for "Academics"—those authority figures who withheld their official approval for so long—it is difficult not to discern the first seeds of it here, both in the subject-matter of the work as well as in its reception by the establishment. In both the canvas and the competition, judges could not correctly judge.[65] Rouault's painting of *Christ et Docteur* (1937, **no. 53**) suggests that this memory endured.

In 1895, disappointment came again as Rouault lost the Prix de Rome a second time with *Le Christ mort pleuré par les Saintes Femmes* (*The Dead Christ Wept over by the Holy Women*, 1895). Perhaps it was of some consolation to the young man from leftist Belleville that *The Dead Christ* was bought by Marcel Sembat, a socialist deputy in parliament, who then became one of Rouault's most avid collectors. (Was it because the work evoked Manet's *Dead Christ with Angels*? **fig. 16**) After this second loss, Moreau counseled Rouault, his favorite student, to quit the École des Beaux-Arts. Rouault did not take this counsel,[66] going on instead to produce two works that copied Moreau's own style even more overtly: *Stella Matutina* (Morning Star), a medieval appellation for the Virgin Mary used in plainchant hymns (*Ave stella matutina*) but also associated with late-nineteenth-century occultism;[67] and *Stella Vespertina* (Evening Star), a title which appeared in the evening of Rouault's life, as the titles of paintings in the 1940s and the title of a book in 1947).[68]

After the four years of having studied Catholic doctrine with Fr. Vallée, Rouault chose this moment—a moment of grave personal disappointment—to proceed with making his First Communion at the age of twenty-four. Although Rouault had met Vallée a year before meeting Moreau, his teacher's own association with religion, while ambiguous, would certainly not have impeded Rouault's religious quest. Art "can lead to religion (I refer here to no particular orthodoxy)," said Moreau, "and to true religion which uplifts the soul and guides its workings towards an ideal of beauty and perfection."[69] That same year, Rouault also participated in the Salon des artistes français for the first time and won a prize for his *L'Enfant Jésus parmi les docteurs* (1894, discussed above).

In 1896, the twenty-five-year-old Rouault visited the gallery of Ambroise Vollard at 6 rue Lafitte. Although he did not meet the man who would one day become his exclusive dealer, Rouault made his first encounter here with the works of Paul Cézanne and Paul Gauguin.[70] Maurice Denis had not yet painted his *Hommage á Cézanne* (1900), but he had already published his Nabi manifesto, "Définition du néo-traditionnisme" (1890), based on the work of Gauguin.[71]Although present-day readers might not immediately associate Cézanne and Gauguin with the school of Moreau, Rouault very likely imagined them that way. At least as late as 1910, not only Cézanne and Denis but also Henri Matisse, Rouault's classmate in Moreau's atelier, were able to be labeled as "symbolists."[72]

In the spring of 1897, Rouault participated once again in the Salon des artistes français. More significantly, he also participated in the sixth (and final) Salon de la Rose+Croix, the exhibition aspect of the Rose+Croix+Catholique founded by Rosicrucian occultist Josephin Péladan. (Moreau kept his distance from the movement.[73]) This participation suggests that, by the time he reached age twenty-six, Rouault had been deeply immersed in this world of symbolism, Catholic revivalism, and decadence.

The moment forms an eery parallel with that of a dozen years earlier. As we have seen, by age fourteen (on the occasion of his witnessing the

funeral of Victor Hugo), Rouault had been thoroughly immersed in a laicist, republican, and socialist culture. Then, his grandfather—whom Rouault regarded as his "sole spiritual support until Gustave Moreau"[74]—passed away. Twelve years later, at age twenty-six, he had gone a great distance in the opposite direction: studying with the figurehead of the "symbolists"; making his First Communion as a Roman Catholic; exhibiting with the Rosicrucians. Even more poignantly, it is at just this moment that Rouault would be left behind once again. On April 18, 1898, at the age of seventy-two, Gustave Moreau died of stomach cancer.

V. 1898–1901: Dark Night of Embodied Soul

A year earlier, Rouault had written to Moreau: "You who in short are and have been for me, both for my Art and outside of it, the best guide and *Father*, that is the only word that can express my gratitude towards you."[75] Now, not only were Rouault's grandfather and artistic "father" deceased, but his father and mother were in Algeria consoling his sister Émilie following the death of her husband. In his old age Rouault recalled this moment for his biographer, Pierre Courthion: "*It was the abyss* (*C'était le gouffre*). My family having left Paris temporarily for Algiers, I experienced absolute solitude" [*Je connus une solitude complète*.]."[76]

Although we cannot know whether this remembrance decades after the fact reflects Rouault's interpretation at the time, his reference to "The Abyss"—a central concept in Pascal and celebrated as such by Baudelaire in his poem *Le Gouffre*—is extremely suggestive in its association between this event and Pascal's (and Baudelaire's) accounts of experiencing the "abyss." We know that as early as 1893, i.e., the year after Rouault had entered Moreau's atelier, Moreau had sent him a three-page letter (dated August 21, 1893) from Évian where he was undergoing a hydrotherapeutic cure. In the letter Moreau had scribbled in pencil this quotation:

> human knowledge (*la connaissance humaine*)
> is like a sphere which
> will grow without ceasing as
> it increases its volume, increasing
> the number of contact points
> with the unknown (*avec l'inconnu*) (Pascal)[77]

For Pascal, the limitless growth in knowledge of the unknown leads to the experience of anxiety: "Whoever considers himself in this way will be afraid of himself, and, seeing himself supported by the size nature has given him between these two abysses of the infinite and nothingness, he will tremble at these marvels." This anxiety can lead to epistemological modesty: "I believe that, as his curiosity changes into admiration, he will be more disposed to contemplate them in silence than to examine them with presumption." Even more than this, it can lead us to see our true condition, a place where Heraclitus, Buddhism, and Pascal seem to intersect:

> This is our true state. It is what makes us incapable of certain knowledge or absolute ignorance. We float on a vast ocean, ever uncertain and adrift, blown this way or that. Whenever we think we have some point to which we can cling and fasten ourselves, it shakes free and leaves us behind. And if we follow it, it eludes our grasp, slides away, and escapes forever. Nothing stays still for us. This is our natural condition and yet the one farthest from our inclination. We burn with desire to find firm ground and an ultimate secure base on which to build a tower reaching up to the infinite. But our whole foundation cracks, and the earth opens up into abysses.
>
> Let us, therefore, not seek certainty and stability. Our reason is always deceived by inconstant appearances; nothing can affix the finite between the two infinites [of being and nothingness] that both enclose and escape it.[78]

It is very probable (especially given his compulsive personality and voracious reading) that Rouault,

five years after having received Moreau's letter from Évian, had already immersed himself in the thought of Pascal and, even then, had interpreted the experience he was undergoing as conforming to this description: "our whole foundation cracks, and the earth opens up into abysses." However he understood it, the twenty-seven-year-old artist, suddenly all alone, might seek stability—but he would not find it. Rather, he fell into a deep depression, rarely eating and living without fixed lodging.[79] Quitting the École des Beaux-Arts, he distanced himself from academic art and increasingly painted somber works in a "Rembrandtesque" style.

One year later, in the spring of 1899, Rouault exhibited two works at the Salon des artistes français: *Le Christ et les disciples d'Ammaüs* (Christ and the Disciples on the Way to the Emmaus) and *Orphée* (Orpheus). Both figures are significant for their relationships to death. In the first, disciples of Jesus who are distraught over his death speak with him during a long trip by foot without ever realizing that it is he himself, raised from the dead. As for the second, the mythological figure of Orpheus had been treated with great poignancy by Moreau in 1865. There, Moreau depicted a woman who had found Orpheus's lyre and head, miraculously able to sing and speak after having been severed by the Maenads in their Dionysian fury. As several renditions of *Lacrymae sunt rerum* in this exhibition demonstrate, (**nos. 27z, 73, 74, 84, 85**) the blinded Orpheus and his lyre would remain key leitmotifs for Rouault for decades to come.

In 1900, Moreau's ghost appeared again as Rouault exhibited his own version of *Salomé* at the Salon des artistes français. He also took a large step forward in public recognition by exhibiting at the Exposition universelle held at the Grand Palais from April 15 through October 15.

In 1901, a month shy of his thirtieth birthday, Rouault still could not escape from his serious depression. Seeking refuge in religion, he went to the Benedictine Abbey of Ligugé in April (April 18th being the third anniversary of Moreau's death) in order to make a retreat and, perhaps, even to retire.[80] Joris-Karl Huysmans, by now a Benedictine oblate, was at the abbey at the same time, having built the Maison Notre-Dame there where he had hoped to bring together an artists' colony. (It is difficult to imagine, especially given the way in which Huysmans had immortalized Moreau and his *Salomé* in *Against Nature* [1884, noted above], that Rouault had not already read *Là-bas* [*Down There*, 1891] before his stay at Ligugé.) Huysmans' aesthetic of "supernatural realism," in which the naturalist "ugliness" of Matthias Grünewald's *Crucifixion* is paradoxically the means of conveying the absolute "idealism" of Christ ("this Redeemer of whores, this God of the morgue"), would have provided Rouault with a way of reconciling his realist origins with his formal training.[81]

The dream of an artists' colony was never realized. The Law of Associations was promulgated on July 1, 1901, effectively disbanding almost all religious congregations in France. The Ligugé monks went into exile in Belgium on September 28. Both Huysmans and Rouault left the deserted abbey a month later, returning to Paris and going their separate ways.

After the first twenty years of his life spent in a working-class milieu, Rouault had left Realism behind for Symbolism and academic painting. Now, after spending the 1890s in a Salon and symbolist milieu, Rouault abandoned Academic painting and turned to realist subjects. But he would not leave behind a symbolist's sense that between semblance and reality there lies a gap. Perhaps taking his cue from conversations at Ligugé, Rouault would set out to formulate his own variety of "supernatural realism"—a mystic modernism.

Endnotes

1 Ernest Becker, *The Denial of Death* (New York: The Free Press, 1973) 25-26.

2 "Three Wars" is the first section of the essay by Daniel Théote, "Intimate Moments with Rouault," *Tricolor*, American edition of *La France Libre* 1 / 2 (May 1944): 65-96.

3 Gérald Dittmar, *Belleville, de l'annexion à la Commune* (Paris: Dittmar, 2007); Thierry Fayt, *Les villages de Paris: Belleville, Charonne, Auteuil et Passy: mythes et réalités d'un espace communautaire* (Paris: Harmattan, 2003); Gérard Jacquemet, *Belleville au XIXe siècle: du faubourg à la ville* (Paris: Éditions de l'École des hautes études en sciences sociales: J. Touzot, 1984); Robert Garric, *Belleville; scènes de la vie populaire. Avec des témoignages et souvenirs de Louis Charvet, Pierre Deffontaines, Louis Leprince-Ringuet, J.Fontanet* (1928; Limoges: Rougerie, 1971). This last won Garric the Grand Prix of the Académie française in 1928. See Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 265-266. For present-day Belleville, see Catherine Sanderson, "My love affair with Belleville," *The Observer* (2 March 2008), "Features," 5. "Catherine Sanderson, better known as the blogger Petite Anglaise, describes how a vibrant working-class Paris neighbourhood captured her heart." http://www.guardian.co.uk/travel/2008/mar/02/paris.france. Accessed 20 March 2008

4 Alain Dalotel, *Gabriel Ranvier (1828-1879): le Christ de Belleville, blanquiste, Communard et franc-maçon, maire du XXe arrondissement de Paris* (Paris: Dittmar, 2005).

5 Philip M. Katz, *From Appomattox to Montmartre: Americans and the Paris Commune* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998).

6 For accessible and summary overviews see Stephen Badsey, *The Franco-Prussian War, 1870-1871* (Oxford: Osprey, 2003); and William H. C. Smith, *Second Empire and Commune: France 1848-1871*, 2nd ed. (New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 1996). See also: Geoffrey Wawro, *The Franco-Prussian War: The German Conquest of France in 1870-1871* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2003); David Wetzel, *A Duel of Giants: Bismarck, Napoleon III, and the Origins of the Franco-Prussian War* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 2001); Alain Plessis, *The Rise and Fall of the Second Empire, 1852-1871*, tr. Jonathan Mandelbaum (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1985).

7 J. D. Hayhurst, *The Pigeon Post into Paris, 1870-1871* (Ashford [Middlesex, UK]: J.D. Hayhurst, 65 Ford Bridge Road, 1970). Hayhurst's self-published book is now available in digital format: http://www.cix.co.uk/~mhayhurst/jdhayhurst/pigeon/pigeon.html Accessed 23 May 2008.

8 See statistics tallied by Pierre Savelon: September-October 1870 (Pigeons released: 105/ pigeons arrived: 22); November 1870 (released: 83/arrived 19); December 1870 (released 49/arrived 12); January 1871 (released 43/arrived 3); February 1871 (released 22/arrived 3). Pierre Savelon, *La poste pendant le siège* (Paris: Le Monde des philatélistes, 1961); in Hayhurst.

9 See the 1971 documentary film: Isabelle Rouault and Pierre Courthion, *Georges Rouault* (Texture Films, 1971).

10 Jean-François Lecaillon, *Le siège de Paris en 1870: Récits de témoins* (Paris: Bernard Giovanangeli Éditeur, 2005); Victor Debuchy, *La Vie à Paris pendant le siège 1870-1871* (Paris: Éditions L'Harmattan, 1999).

11 Hollis Clayson, *Paris in Despair: Art and Everyday Life Under Siege (1870-71)* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2002) 175.

12 Clayson 174.

13 Smith, *Second Empire and Commune* 61.

14 Stephen Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism: Mystic Modernism in Postwar Paris, 1919-1933* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 2005) 57, 64, 73, 125.

15 For brief accessible overviews see David A. Shafer, *The Paris Commune* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); and Robert Tombs, *The Paris Commune 1871* (New York: Longman, 1999). For a monumental overview published during the centennial, see Georges Soria, *Grande histoire de la Commune*, 5 vols. (Paris: R. Laffont, Livre club Diderot, 1970-1971). For daily accounts, see Paule Lejeune, *La Commune de Paris au jour le jour* (18 mars-28 mai 1871) (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2002); and Élie Reclus, *La Commune de Paris: au jour le jour*; 19 mars-28 mai, 1871 (Paris: Schleicher frères, 1908). See also: Gerald Dittmar, *Une Tragédie française: La Commune de Paris de 1871* (Paris: Éditions Dittmar, 2006); Dittmar, *Anthologie de la Commune de Paris de 1871* (Paris: Éditions Dittmar, 2005); Dittmar, *Iconographie de la Commune de Paris de 1871* (Éditions Dittmar, 2005); Dittmar, *Dictionnaire biographique illustré de la Commune de Paris de 1871* (Paris: Éditions Dittmar, 2004); Carolyn Eichner, *Surmounting the Barricades: Women in the Paris Commune* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004); Richard D.E. Burton, *Blood in the City: Violence and Revelation in Paris, 1789-1945* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 2001); Jeannene M. Przyblyski, "Revolution at a Standstill: Photography and the Paris Commune of 1871," *Yale French Studies* 101 (2001) 54-78; John Milner, *Art, War, and Revolution in France, 1870-1871: Myth, Reportage, and Reality* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press,

2000); Musée d'Orsay, *La Commune photographiée*: [Exposition, Paris, Musée d'Orsay, 14 mars-11 juin 2000] (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 2000); Bertrand Taithe, *Defeated Flesh: Medicine, Welfare, and Warfare in the Making of Modern France* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1999); Gay L. Gullickson, *Unruly Women of Paris: Images of the Commune* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 1996); Albert Boime, *Art and the French Commune: Imagining Paris after War and Revolution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1995); Rupert Christiansen, *Paris Babylon: the Story of the Paris Commune* (New York: Viking, 1995). Over 1200 digitized photographs and images recorded during the Siege and Commune of Paris are located in the Charles Deering McCormick Library of Special Collections in the Deering Library at Northwestern University and may be viewed online: http://www.library.northwestern.edu/spec/siege/ Accessed 20 March 2008.

16 The Basilica was later erected as an act of "reparation" for the "sins" of the Communards. See David Harvey, *Paris, Capital of Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Raymond Jonas, *France and the Cult of the Sacred Heart: An Epic Tale for Modern Times* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2000); Harvey, "Monument and Myth," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 49 (1979): 362-381; Harvey, "Monument and Myth: The Building of the Basilica of the Sacred Heart," *Consciousness and the Urban Experience. Studies in the History and Theory of Capitalist Urbanization* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1985): 221-249. For an opposing interpretation, see Jacques Benoist, *Le Sacré-Coeur de Montmartre de 1870 à nos jours* (Paris: Éditions ouvrières, 1992).

17 Christiansen 356; in Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 91.

18 Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 91-92. See also: Yves de la Brière, *Le Père Pierre Olivaint: á propos du cinquantenaire du massacre des Ôtage de la Commune (1871-1921)* (Paris: Gabriel Beauchesne, 1921); (Père) A. Foulongne, *Invention des corps des PP. Olivaint, Caubert et De Bengy de la Compagnie de Jésus: massacrés en haine de la foi, rue Haxo, à Beleville, le vendredi 26 mai 1871* (Paris: V. Retaux, A. Josse, 1898); Armand de Ponlevoy, *Actes de la captivité: et de la mort des RR. PP. P. Olivaint, L. Ducoudray, J. Caubert, A. Clerc, A. de Bengy, de la Compagnie de Jésus*, 4th ed. (Paris: G. Téqui, 1871); Anatole de Bengy, *Mémoires du R.P. de Bengy de la Cie. de Jésus: aumônier de la 8e ambulance pendant la guerre 1870-71: l'un des ôtages de la commune, mis à mort, le 26 mai 1871* (Paris: Adolphe Josse, 1871).

19 Danielle Tartakowsky, *Nous irons chanter sur vos tombes. Le Père-Lachaise, XIXe-XXe siècle* (Paris: Aubier, 1999) 47-76.

20 Lejeune 110.

21 Manet's 1871 lithograph eerily recalls, even as it inverts the protagonists and antagonists, his five versions of *Execution of Emperor Maximilian* done between 1867-1869. See John Elderfield, *Manet and the Execution of Maximilian* (New York: Musem of Modern Art, 2006).

22 This account from Courthion and Rouault 1971 documentary film.

23 On Rouault's self-identification with Villon see Anne Davenport in this volume.

24 See website for the church of Saint Leu-Saint Gilles: http://eglisesaintleu.free.fr/histoire/ Accessed 20 March 2008.

25 Letter of Rouault to André Suarès (27 April 1913), *Correspondance [de] Georges Rouault [et] André Suarès* (Paris: Gallimard, 1960) 49.

26 Peter Starr, *Commemorating Trauma: The Paris Commune and Its Cultural Aftermath* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2006). On trauma as a cultural category, see Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 8, 70, 71-2, 84, 86, 116, 166, 330n31, 447.

27 On realism and naturalism as laicist ideologies, see Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 19-27.

28 Georges Rouault, *Sur l'art et sur la vie* (Paris: Denoël/Gonthier, 1971) 80.

29 *Daumier. L'écriture du lithographe*, ed. Valérie Sueur-Hermel (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, 2008) 73. L. Cassandra Hamrick identifies Baudelaire's source: "*Qui nous délivrera des Grecs et des Romains?*, ce 'vers célèbre,' au dire de Baudelaire (*Œuvres complètes* 2: 556), est de Joseph Berchoux. Comme dans le cas de la phrase qui ouvre le chapitre sur la sculpture ('*L'origine de la sculpture* [...]') dans le *Salon de 1846* de Baudelaire, ce vers est reproduit en italique, indiquant que l'expression circulait librement. De son côté, Gustave Planche avait déjà demandé: 'que signifient ces éternelles études du torse antique? La sculpture serait-elle donc condamnée à une école perpétuelle?' (*L'Artiste*, 22 avril 1832, 127)." See Hamrick, "Baudelaire et la sculpture ennuyeuse de son temps," *Nineteenth-Century French Studies* 35/1 (Fall 2006): 110-131, see p. 128n18.

30 Peter Shaffer, final draft of screenplay for *Amadeus* (December 1982), http://www.imsdb.com/scripts/Amadeus.html Accessed 25 May 2008. Although Shaffer's portrayal of Mozart's encounter is fictional, the composer's turn to subjects that were realist (*Le nozze di Figaro*) and nationalist (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, sponsored by the *Nationalsingspiel*, a German-language opera project of Joseph II) is

factual. The rhetorical question, "Who will deliver us from the Greeks and the Romans?," was part of the Romantic protest against the academic theory that history painting consisted of "subjects taken from Greek and Roman history and mythology, the deeds of kings and nobles, and themes from the Christian story." The Romantics instead advocated the representation of national history. See Athena S. Leoussi, "The Ethno-cultural Roots of National Art," *Nations and Nationalism* 10/1-2 (2004): 143-159, see p. 146.

31 Édouard Manet, *The Mocking of Christ* (1865), oil on canvas, Art Institute of Chicago: http://www.artic.edu/artaccess/AA_Rococo/pages/12manet_lg1.shtml. Accessed 7 June 2008.

32 Georges Rouault, *Georges Rouault, forme, couleur, harmonie,* catalogue published for the Musée d'art moderne et contemporain de Strasbourg exhibition, 10 November 2006 to 18 March 2007, commissariat Fabrice Hergott (Strasbourg: Musées de Strasbourg, 2006) 238.

33 Hergott, *Forme, couleur, harmonie* 238.

34 Maurice Barrès quoted in Maurice Agulhon, "Paris: A Traversal from East to West," in *Realms of Memory*, under the direction of Pierre Nora; English language edition ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman, trans. Arthur Goldhammer, 3 vols. (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1998) 3:522-553, see p. 524; see also drawing by Quesnay de Beaurepaire, *Les Funérailles de Victor Hugo, 1er juin 1885: Aspect de la place Saint-Germain-des-Prés*, in Agulhon 3:541.

35 James Thrall Soby, *Georges Rouault: Paintings and Prints* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1945) 35.

36 Anonymous reviewer in *Le Calepin* (15 December 1920): n.p.; qtd. in Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 230.

37 See also Jacques Maritain's 1910 portrayal of Rouault as an "artisan," an understanding he owed to Rouault; in Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 221.

38 See Bernard Dorival and Isabelle Rouault, *Rouault: l'œuvre peint*, 2 vols. (Monte-Carlo: Éditions André Sauret, 1988) 1:21-31. (The OP numbers are those assigned to Rouault's works in this catalogue raisonné.) The other six works are OP 1-6. *Le Chemin du Calvaire* is OP 45.

39 The catalogue raisonné gives this entry: "Signed and dated in the bottom right, 1891 (?). On the reverse side of a photograph, G. Rouault dated this work around 1896." OP 45.

40 For more on Veronica's veil, see James Keenan and Nora Possenti Ghiglia in this volume.

41 In this and subsequent quotations from Emmerich's text I have followed the published English translation but also altered it in places to conform better to the French translation (from the original German) by the Abbé Pasturel. For English, see Anna Katharina Emmerich, *The Dolorous Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ* (Hawthorne, Calif.: Christian Book Club of America, 1968); for French, see Emmerich, *La sainte chronique: ou, Nouvelle vie de Notre-Seigneur Jésus-Christ et de la très-sainte Vierge, d'après les visions d'Anne-Catherine Emmerich*, tr. M. l'Abbé Pasturel (Paris: V. Sarlit, 1861). English 256; French 513.

42 Emmerich, English 256-257; French 513.

43 Emmerich, English 257; French 514. The English translation ("so deplorable a condition of dirt and misery") sanitizes Emmerich's description which follows the grotesque aesthetic embraced by nineteenth-century Catholic Revivalism. See Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 40-45.

44 The point of Emmerich's distinction here is an ironic one between legalism and compassion. Since the Pharisees become impure by coming into contact with Jesus' still flowing blood and must then undergo ritual purification before entering the Temple, they are reluctant to go near him. Ironically, those less concerned about religious purity laws are able to engage in compassionate acts. Since Simon of Cyrene is not Jewish ("a pagan"), although his sense of hygiene might be filled with "disgust" at so much blood, he does not have religious purity concerns about contact with it. The story is patterned after the biblical parable of "The Good Samaritan" (Luke 10:30-37). The priest and the Levite, followers of Jewish law, avoid contact with the man who has been beaten up and left lying on the side of the road, going so far as to cross to the other side. Only the Samaritan, considered religiously heterodox by the Jews who worship in Jerusalem (Samaritans worshiped on Mount Gerizim), risks defilement by attending to the man with compassion. Both the scriptural story and Emmerich's narrative here are inversions of the legal and religious orders. For Veronica's compassionate action as a transgression of purity laws, see James Keenan in this volume.

45 Emmerich, English 258; French 514, 515.

46 Emmerich, English 258, 259; French 515.

47 Emmerich, English 259; French 515, 516.

48 In the French, this line is not incorporated into the text (as in the English translation) but is appended as an independent note at the bottom of the page: "Appelée Véronique, de *vera icon* (vrai portrait), à cause de ce qu'elle fit en ce jour." See Emmerich, French 515.

49 Natasha Grigorian, "The Writings of J.-K. Huysmans and Gustave Moreau's Painting: Affinity or Divergence?," *Nineteenth-Century French Studies* 32/3-4 (Spring-Summer 2004): 282-297.

50 Jean Moréas; in Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 215.

51 However, as Jeffery Howe notes in this volume, Moreau was ambivalent about the image-text relationships, and stressed that he wanted the meaning of his paintings to be felt rather than explained by a literary text."

52 The ideal, said Mallarmé, "is to *suggest* the object. It is the perfect use of this mystery which constitutes the symbol. An object must be gradually evoked in order to show a state of soul ..." Qtd. in Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 215.

53 Statement made by Rouault to *Beaux-Arts* (16 October 1936); in Pierre Courthion, *Georges Rouault* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1962) 41; in *FCH* 239.

54 Job 42: 3,5-6. *The Holy Bible containing the Old and New Testaments with the Apocryphal / Deuterocanonical Books. New Revised Standard Version* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1989). Hereafter NRSV.

55 For Rouault's relationship to the texts of Charles Baudelaire, see Soo Kang and Susan Michalczyk in this volume.

56 Baudelaire, "Ideal," in Charles Baudelaire, *The Complete Poems of Baudelaire*, trans. and annotated by Philip Higson and Elliot R. Ashe (Chester, UK: Limouse Museum Publications, 1992) 19-20; "L'Idéal" in *Baudelaire: oeuvres complètes*, 2 vols, ed. Claude Pichois (Paris: Gallimard, 1975-1976) 1:22. For Agamemnon, see Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, lines 1525-1530.

57 Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, Act I, Scene 5: 63-66.

58 Stephen Schloesser, S.J., "From Sprititual Naturalism to Psychical Naturalism: Catholic Decadence, Lutheran Munch, and Madone Mystérique," in Jeffery Howe, ed., *Edvard Munch: Psyche, Symbol, Expression* (Chestnut Hill: McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College, 2001) 75-110. See esp. 81-83

59 Rouault quoted in Pierre Courthion, *Georges Rouault*, including a catalogue of works prepared with the collaboration of Isabelle Rouault (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1962) 42.

60 Judges 16:21. NRSV.

61 Judges 16:25-30. NRSV.

62 See Jeffery Howe in this volume.

63 Luke 2:46-48. NRSV.

64 Léon Lehmann quoted in Courthion (1962) 44. The Alsatian painter lived with the Rouault family for several years. See Courthion (1962) 81.

65 I am grateful to Gael Mooney for underscoring the importance of this episode.

66 Hergott, *Forme, couleur, harmonie* 240: compare entries for 1895 and 1898.

67 Rouault's 1895 production of "Stella Matutina" fell into the midst of a firestorm over Satanism, "Luciferianism" and Rosicrucianism: Huysmans's 1895 preface to Jules Bois' *Le satanisme et la magie* distinguished between Satanism and Luciferianism (holding that Lucifer was the god of light); in 1893, Stéphane Mallarmé wrote about the quarrel between Huysmans and the Rosicrucians. Around 1900, Yeats and others named their cult "Stella Matutina, the Star of Morning, the dawn star of the brightest of the fallen angels." See Michael Fixler, "Affinities between J.-K. Huysmans and the 'Rosicrucian' Stories of W. B. Yeats," *Proceedings of the Modern Language Association* 74/4 (September 1959): 464-469. See also Alex Owen, *The Place of Enchantment: British Occultism and the Culture of the Modern* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2004) 83, 225, 227. Given Rouault's interest in the identity of opposites, it is very likely that "Stella Matutina" would have attracted him because it represented both Christ and the Virgin Mary as well as Lucifer. For more references to *Stella Matutina* and *Vespertina* that would come twenty years later, see Rouault, "Stella Matutina," *Funambules* 1 (December 1926): 49-57; and letter of Rouault to André Suarès (n.d., ca. 1927), in Rouault and Suarès, *Correspondance* 238.

68 See *Stella Vespertina (paysage biblique)* (1942, OP 2334); *Stella Vespertina* (ca. 1945, OP 2362); *Stella Vespertina* (1945-1948, OP 2375); and Georges Rouault, *Stella Vespertina* (Paris: René Drouin, 1947).

69 Moreau; qtd. in Pierre-Louis Mathieu, *Gustave Moreau*, trans. Tamara Blondel, Louise Guiney, Mark Hutchinson (New York: Flammarion, 1995) 219. I am grateful to Katherine Getz for this reference.

70 Jean-Paul Morel, *C'était Ambroise Vollard* (Paris: Fayard, 2007); *Cezanne to Picasso: Ambroise Vollard, Patron of the Avant-garde*, ed. Rebecca A. Rabinow (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2006).

71 For Denis see Michael Marlais, "Maurice Denis's Conservative Modernism," *Conservative Echoes in Fin-de-siècle Parisian Art Criticism* (University Park: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1992) 185-219; Michael Paul Driskel: *Representing Belief: Religion, Art, and Society in Nineteenth-Century France* (University Park: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1992); and Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 30, 149-51, 159, 197, 231.

72 In 1910, Robert Dell could write: "It is from Cezanne too that the Symbolist school derives, the school to which M. [Maurice] Denis himself belongs, although his work shows also the influence of Puvis de Chavannes, while remaining intensely personal. M. Odilon Redon was another of the pioneers of the school, of which Gauguin and M. Henri-Matisse are prominent examples." Dell, essay in *Catalogue of an Exhibition of the Work of Modern French Artists. Public Art Galleries, Brighton. June 10th to August 31st, 1910* (England: Brighton, 1910). The exhibition

included works by Bonnard, Carriere, Cross, Denis, Derain, Friesz, Legrand, Le Sidaner, Luce, Marquet, Redon, Rouault, Vlaminck, Vuillard, etc. This was only the second showing of any work by Matisse in Britain, preceeded only by the First Post-Impressionist show at the New Grafton Galleries in 1908.

73 See Jeffery Howe in this volume.

74 Soby 35.

75 Rouault to Moreau, 1896; in Mathieu 233. I am grateful to Katherine Getz for this citation.

76 Rouault, quoted in Courthion (1962) 73; in French edition (Paris: Flammarion, 1962) 79. Translation altered; emphasis added. Rouault's use of the word *gouffre* evokes Baudelaire's poem, *Le Gouffre* (The Abyss). For this concept in Pascal and Baudelaire, see my discussion of Notre Dame de la Fin des Terres in this volume: Schloesser, "Notes on the *Miserere* plates exhibited in *Mystic Masque*."

77 At some later unknown date, Rouault had added this note underneath: "written with pencil by G. Moreau, already sick, retraced in ink by me (and also certain letters written in this way that were slightly erased)." I am deeply grateful to Gilles Rouault for supplying this information.

This passage from Pascal must have been well-known in circles having to do with the esoteric. It is quoted verbatim in an article on "Le Spiritisme" by Henry Decharbogne in *Larousse Mensuel* 181 (March 1922): 740-744. "Rappelons tout d'abord cette pensée de Pascal: 'La connaissance humaine est pareille à une sphère qui grossirait sans cesse ; à mesure qu'augmente son volume, grandit le nombre de ses points de contact avec l'inconnu.'" For more on Moreau's relationship to Pascal's writings, see Jeffery Howe in this volume.

78 Pascal, *Pensées* Pleiade 185/Lafuma199/Sellier 230. Fragments of Pascal's *Pensées* are referenced according to their Pleiade / Lafuma / Sellier numbers. For Pleiade, see Pascal, *Oeuvres complètes*, 2 vols. (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2000) vol. 2; for Lafuma, see Pascal, *Pensées*, trans. A.J. Krailsheimer, rev. ed. (New York: Penguin, 1995); for Sellier, see Pascal, *Pensées*, ed. and trans. Roger Ariew (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2005).

79 Hergott, *Forme, couleur, harmonie* 240.

80 Rouault is quoted as saying: "I knew Bloy and Huysmans and went to Ligugé thinking seriously of retiring there." See Georges Charensol, *Georges Rouault. L'homme et l'oeuvre* (Paris: Éditions des Quatre Chemins, 1926) 24; qtd. in Dyrness, 67. However, this would seem to conflict with the apparent novelty of encountering Bloy in 1904.

81 "If I take this to its logical conclusion," concludes Huysmans' protagonist Durtal, "I end up in the Catholicism of the Middle Ages, in a form of mystical naturalism (*naturalisme mystique*)." It is also worth noting that Huysmans published his Decadent hagiography of *Sainte Lydwine de Schiedam* (1901) in this same year. See Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 39-44.

The Refuge of Art: Gustave Moreau and the Legacy of Symbolism

Jeffery Howe

> "You who in short are and have been for me, both for my Art and outside of it, the best guide and the Father, that is the only word that can express my gratitude towards you." [1]

With these heartfelt words in 1896, Georges Rouault expressed his profound devotion to Gustave Moreau (1826-1898). Rouault's relations with his own father were distant and difficult; he found support first from his grandfather, then Moreau. In 1945 he wrote: "My grandfather died when I was about fifteen. He was my sole spiritual support until Gustave Moreau. I was only thirty when Moreau died. Then there was a desert to cross, and painting: the oasis or the mirage."[2]

The oasis of art was a source of comfort from the sorrows of life for both Moreau and Rouault. Moreau was his teacher and mentor for six years, and after his death Rouault became the first curator of the Musée Moreau, housed in the artist's home at 14 rue de la Rochefoucauld in Paris. Moreau had lived in a modest house on this site with his mother and father since 1852; while his parents were alive he had a small studio on the third floor. Looking to the future, he remodeled it with grand studios and a new façade in 1895 (fig. 1).[3] He planned for it to become a museum of his work, leaving his friend Henri Rupp in charge of his legacy. Moreau had not exhibited at the Salon since 1880 and kept his works guarded from the general public and even his pupils, but he was determined to present his entire body of work as a unity. The Musée Moreau opened to the public in 1903. The first museum created in France for a single artist, it contains over 14,000 of his works, with nearly 6,000 available for viewing on the gallery walls or in special racks.[4] There was a deep bond between Moreau and Rouault and a close examination of Moreau's art and aesthetic principles reveals many points of contact. Both artists were preoccupied with the unresolved conflicts between faith and profane desires, and their dilemma is reflected in obsessive images of fallen women, Salome and other legendary fatal women for Moreau and urban prostitutes for Rouault.

Moreau's house was a palace of art and a symbol of his success. The formal, even staid, classical façade conceals a rich wonderland of art within. It was a refuge from the modern city. The stresses of modern life and their role in fomenting neurasthenia were a common topic of debate at the time, and formed the basis of Max Nordau's notorious denunciation of modern art as physically and morally decadent in his book *Degeneration* (1892).[5] Artists were thought to be particularly sensitive to the stresses of modern life. In recent years, the discourse on Symbolist art has shifted from a stereotyped portrayal of the hypersensitive neurotic fleeing

from reality to a more nuanced view of the movement as a social critique of materialism and harsh urban realities.[6] The legend of Moreau as a hermit in the center of Paris, retiring from the tumult of the modern world, was fostered by his rejection of both academic and modernist art circles and his eventual withdrawal from official exhibitions. This romantic image was promoted as early as 1880 by Joris-Karl Huysmans, who described Moreau as a recluse lost in his dream world in his review of the official Salon.[7] The ever skeptical Degas, however, observed that if Moreau was a hermit, he was one who "knew all the schedules of the trains."[8]

Fig. 1. Moreau Museum, Paris. Façade of 1895 by Albert Lafon (1860-1935). Photo: Jeffery Howe

Fig. 2. Gustave Moreau, *The Entombment*, ca. 1867, oil on panel, 9 3/5 x 7 1/2 in. Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University Art Museums, Bequest of Grenville L. Winthrop / The Bridgeman Art Library

Symbolist artists sought not merely to escape modern urban life but to redeem it, as art historian Sharon Hirsh astutely suggests. The redemptive power of art was a tenet of Richard Wagner, a revered figure for French Symbolists. Moreau's dream-like art provided both artist and viewer a refuge from the chaos and cacophony of the street. Joris-Karl Huysmans described his reactions on leaving an exhibit of Moreau's work, commenting that despite being assaulted by the ugliness and din of the modern city:

> my eye found a new serenity and could look at, and size up, the shame of modern taste, the street…these roadways shaken by enormous horse-drawn buses and ignoble publicity carts; these sidewalks filled with a hideous crowd in quest of money: with women degraded by successive confinements, made stupid by horrible barters, with men reading vile newspapers or dreaming of fornications or of fraudulent operations [as they walked] along the shops and offices from which the officially sanctioned crooks of business and finance spy, the better to prey on them—one understood better the work of Gustave Moreau, which stands outside time, escapes into distant realms, glides over dreams, away from the excremental ideas oozing from a whole populace.[9]

To the Symbolists, poor taste and venality were the inevitable result of a society based on greed; art provided a means to resist and counter the prevailing materialism.

The modern realist art which focused on this new environment repelled Moreau, as it seemed to emphasize low-life subjects at the expense of the spirit. He once remarked that "At the Indépendents I see whores and pimps in bars, writhing, swimming in vice, cheap wine, and tobacco smoke, in an atmosphere of cynicism."[10] Nonetheless, he advised his students to see an exhibit by Toulouse-Lautrec in a gallery on the rue Lafitte, with the caveat that

"There's a picture there that looks as if it had been painted with absinthe."[11] Rouault diverged from his mentor in this regard, finding intense poignancy in outcasts and marginal figures.

Both Moreau and Rouault sought to transcend mere realism, which depicted only the surfaces and not the deeper truths that lay beneath appearances. Moreau's rich and sensual art contrasts starkly with the prevailing Realism and Impressionism of his day, and it may come as a surprise to learn that he was an early friend of Edgar Degas (1834-1917) and even traveled with him to Italy in his student years in 1857-59. Moreau refused to embrace either subjects or style reflecting the new modernism, but sought his own version of the "grand tradition" of French painting, a conservative art which, nonetheless, did not conform fully to academic standards. In 1868 Ernest Chesneau hailed him as the new standard bearer of this tradition, following Delacroix and Ingres: "...if there exists in the Salon an artist equipped to take up the scepter of contemporary French painting, a man worthy of carrying it and strong enough to hold it as firmly as these two illustrious predecessors, that man is none other than Monsieur Gustave Moreau."[12]

Disdaining the new movements of Realism and naturalism, Moreau also rejected the anecdotal history painting of popular academicians such as G.C.R. Boulenger and Jean-Léon Gérôme with equal fervor. An admirer of the Italian Renaissance and the Flemish "Primitives," Moreau created his own eclectic and disconcertingly archaic paintings. His anomalous style led Théophile Gautier to call him a "posthumous pupil of Mantegna" in his 1864 Salon review.[13]

Although best known today for his arcane mythological and symbolist works, nearly twenty percent of all Moreau's works represent conventional religious themes, a shared concern that links him to Rouault. This also set him apart from contemporary Realist artists, whose leader Gustave Courbet once famously declared: "I can not paint an angel because I have never seen one."[14] Moreau's first painting exhibited at the Salon was a *Pieta,* or *Descent from the Cross*, shown in 1852 (whereabouts unknown). In 1862 he created a series of *Stations of the Cross* for a church at Decazeville, which were apparently never installed. *The Entombment* of 1867 (**fig. 2**) is typical of his religious paintings, rich with color and with a quiet elegiac mood reinforced by the setting sun. The gold halo of Christ is deliberately archaic, and the rocky landscape recalls the mysterious setting of Leonardo da Vinci's *Madonna of the Rocks* (Louvre, Paris).

Moreau created visionary Christian allegories such as his *Mystic Flower* of 1892 (Moreau Museum, Paris), but even his mythological works have religious significance.[15] His final masterpiece, *Jupiter and Semele* (Moreau Museum, Paris, 1896) was imbued with Christian meaning for him. In the manner of Renaissance Neo-Platonists, he found a way to reconcile paganism with Christianity:

> Atoms and particles of Christianity appear in this composition. The death of the senses, the destruction of physical being before the soul can enter immortal life, and the joyfulness of beings at the sight of the divine light and their encounter with the divine ideal—all this bears the stamp of Christianity. The essence of paganism is vitiated by the inversion and distortion of its symbolism.[16]

Jupiter and Semele invert the symbolism of the Annunciation; the god Jupiter destroys Semele at the moment he reveals himself to her, and their child Dionysus is born of her sacrifice.

Moreau's symbolism stresses the correspondences between visible forms and spiritual meanings. He described the artist as having a double nature, writing for earth and heaven simultaneously.[17] Charles Baudelaire charted this double road with his poem "Correspondences" in *Les Fleurs du Mal* in 1857, and it was the basis of Joris-Karl Huysmans' strategy to incorporate a spiritual quest in decadent literature.[18] It is in this fundamental yet modern religiosity that one finds the clearest link between Moreau and Rouault. Moreau taught that art could foster religious faith: "Art can lead to religion—and to real religion, the kind that elevates the soul."[19]

The passionate devotion Moreau aroused among Symbolist writers led to confusion between

his intentions and the goals of Symbolist and Decadent literature.[20] They shared similar concerns, but they were not identical. Joris-Karl Huysmans's descriptions of Moreau's paintings in the first great novel of the Decadent movement, *À Rebours (Against Nature)* in 1884, made the artist famous. Moreau was ambivalent about this, and stressed that he wanted the meaning of his paintings to be perceived directly—felt rather than explained—with the viewer's imagination unfettered by a literary text.[21] Ironically, Moreau frequently wrote detailed descriptions of his paintings, first for his deaf mother, then occasionally for clients and friends. In 1896, he wrote a lengthy explanation of the symbolism of *Jupiter and Semele* for the purchaser Leopold Goldschmidt, but begged him to keep it secret.[22] Moreau's most extensive commentary on his works is a group of twenty-nine notes written in the fall of 1897, entrusted to his faithful executor, Henri Rupp.[23] As with many Symbolist poets, Moreau treasured the possibility of multiple meanings in works of art and also felt that the artist needed to be protected against overly simplistic interpreters. His insistence on ambiguity helped preserve his independence and also highlighted the essential mystery of the world.[24]

Moreau and other Symbolist artists and writers rejected the reductionist materialism of bourgeois society that threatened to deny that mystery. Their idealism had both conservative and revolutionary aspects. Successive challenges to established beliefs by Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche, Charles Darwin, and Sigmund Freud seemed to make "everything solid melt in air."[25] The destabilizing flux of the modern world was echoed in the shimmering veils of color used by the Impressionists as well, according to art historians who have noted the social implications of their work.[26] The Symbolists looked for something deeper and more enduring on which to rely, however. In this context a variety of spiritual revivals took place, including a significant Catholic revival in France.[27]

The conversion of the decadent author J.-K. Huysmans is instructive because it is so extreme. He began as a Realist author in the manner of Émile Zola, created the first Decadent novel in 1884, explored Satanism by 1890, and finally returned to orthodox Catholicism and ended his life as an oblate brother. His novels *À Rebours* (*Against Nature*, 1884), *Là Bas* (*Down There*, 1890) and *La Cathédrale* (1895) chart this decadent pilgrim's progress. In a retrospective preface for his seminal novel *À Rebours*, Huysmans wrote in 1903:

> In all this hurly-burly, a single writer alone saw clear, Barbey d'Aurévilly, who, be it said, had no personal acquaintance with me. In an article in the *Constitutionnel*, bearing date July 28th, 1884, and which has been reprinted in his *Le Roman Contemporain* published in 1902, he wrote:
>
> *After such a book, it only remains for the author to choose between the muzzle of a pistol or the foot of the cross.*
>
> The choice has been made.[28]

Moreau frequently professed his faith in God, and artistic intuition:

> Do you believe in God? I believe in him alone. I do not believe either in what I touch or in what I see. I only believe what I do not see and uniquely what I feel. My brain and my reason seem ephemeral and of a doubtful reality to me; my inner feeling alone seems eternal and un-questionably sure.[29]

Moreau's religious inspiration was drawn from many sources. Rouault recounted how Moreau "often talked to him 'of Baudelaire, Nerval, of Flaubert…of Pascal, the recluses of Port-Royal, also of Nicole, of Racine, of Vigny.'"[30] One might expect that Moreau would praise contemporaries such as Baudelaire and Flaubert, but his interest in the ascetic simplicity of Jansenism as embodied in the religious community of Port-Royal is more unusual. Jansenism was a Catholic reform movement in the seventeenth century based on the writings of Cornelius Otto Jansen, a Dutch theologian who urged a return to the austere faith of St. Augustine. The

convent of Port-Royal became a center for followers of Jansen, of whom Blaise Pascal was the most prominent. Jansenist aesthetics, best represented by the seventeenth-century French painter Philippe de Champaigne, favor unadorned and direct realism and emphasized stark truth in portraiture and representations of religious stories.[31] In contrast, Moreau's art was so richly encrusted with symbols and complex ornaments that Degas once snidely observed that Moreau "would have us believe that the gods wear pocket watches."[32] However, Jansenist doctrine emphasized original sin, and the need to overcome the body and its sinful desires, which is also a theme at the heart of much of Moreau's art. Degas and Moreau read Pascal in their youth, and Degas wrote to Moreau recommending the section of Pascal's *Lettres Provinciales,* which called for one to look on the self as hateful.[33]

Moreau's interest in Pascal was of long duration. In a letter from Moreau dated August 21, 1893, Georges Rouault pasted in a small note handwritten by Moreau quoting Pascal: "human knowledge is like a constantly enlarging sphere, which in proportion to the augmentation of its volume, increases the number of points of contact with the unknown."[34] Another time Moreau wrote of God in terms that echoed the emphasis on grace and charity that characterized the tenets of Jansenism, as echoed in Pascal's *Pensées*:

> Don't look for God anywhere but in that mysterious influence which makes us love that which is beyond life, sacrifice, effort without reward, and which makes us comprehend love and charity, the two divine and supra-terrestrial essences. God is that incessant perfume of our soul which gives us the sense of the non-sense of life.[35]

Moreau asserted that art is a service to humanity, which despite its human origins has something of the divine in it. He compared art to charitable works as a form of devotion: "Art is, after charity, well after Christian charity, the unique means for man to express that which is sacred and divine in him with a mysterious language which is unceasingly renewed according to inflexible laws, sublime and providential."[36] With his focus on outcasts and marginal figures, particularly prostitutes, Rouault built on Moreau's insight, and sought to unite the twin strands of art and charity.

Other dimensions of Moreau's art contributed to his legacy for future artists. His interest in psychology provided a link between Symbolism and Expressionism and Surrealism. Moreau also revitalized mythic themes, an interest shared by later Surrealists. André Breton and Georges Bataille were among the rare admirers of Moreau in the early twentieth century when his style had passed out of fashion.[37] Moreau's encouragement of personal expression over academic rules was critical to the development of students in his atelier, and one of the reasons that Rouault and Henri Matisse regarded him so highly. Moreau's comments on abstraction suggest another connection to later modern art movements:

> One thing alone dominates me, a burning enthusiasm for abstraction. The expression of human feelings, and the passions of man have a keen interest for me, no doubt, but I am less drawn to express these movements of the soul and the mind than to render visible, so to speak, the inner illuminations which cannot be defined and which have something divine in their apparent insignificance and which, translated by the marvelous effects of pure plastic art, open truly magical horizons, which I could even call sublime.[38]

Some of Moreau's sketches, found in his studio after his death, are almost totally non-representational experiments in color. He was a devotee of idealism, but also enchanted with the material aspect of art. Nineteenth-century art theory cast the relationship of idea to the material substance of art in strongly gendered terms, with the male intellect needing to dominate the female material, as noted by Scott C. Allan in a recent article on Moreau's *Oedipus and the Sphinx.*[39]

Moreau was proud to call himself a worker, an "assembler of dreams."[40] He sought similar dreamlike

Fig. 3. Gustave Moreau, *Oedipus and the Sphinx*, 1864, oil on canvas, 81 1/4 x 41 1/4 in. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Bequest of William H. Herriman, 1920 (21.134.1). Image copyright © The Metropolitan Museum of Art / Art Resource, NY

Fig. 4. Gustave Moreau, *St. Sebastian and an Angel*, ca. 1876, oil on panel. 27 1/3 x 15 3/5 in. Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University Art Museums, Bequest of Grenville L. Winthrop / The Bridgeman Art Library

qualities in the artists he admired. Michelangelo provided an important example of "contemplative immobility" or "beautiful inertia," a predilection for static compositions and frozen gestures.[41] Moreau was fascinated with the way in which Michelangelo's somnambulic figures embodied the "absorption of the individual by the dream."[42] Other artists who embodied Moreau's ideal of art included Andrea Mantegna, Leonardo da Vinci, and Nicholas Poussin. Of critical importance was the way in which they reconciled Christianity with pagan mythology, based on Neo-Platonic philosophy. The idealism of Plato, and its interpretation by Plotinus (205-270 AD) helped inspire St. Augustine and other early Christian theologians. Classical myths had been interpreted allegorically since the Middle Ages, and were held to conceal Christian values under a veil of paganism; this double meaning could be interpreted by those initiated into the code of the mysteries.[43] Marsilio Ficino and other Florentine philosophers made Neo-Platonism central to the Renaissance, and a revived Neo-Platonism was widely influential in the late nineteenth century.[44]

According to Neo-Platonism, the soul was a divine emanation, a spark trapped in an earthly shell. Human life was a kind of fall from grace, and the soul is desperate for liberation and the final union with God. Michelangelo's Neo-Platonism was shaped by the harsh influence of the fundamentalist preacher Savonarola, and he passionately believed that the human body was a prison for the soul.[45] His unfinished sculptures of slaves, still partly encased in the rough matter that surrounds their limbs, was a metaphor for this entrapment.

Late nineteenth-century decadents embraced the idea that Nature was a seductive snare that the artist had to resist. Nature was not a source of purity, but of crime:

> …it is [Nature] who incites man to murder his brother, to eat him, to lock him up and to torture him…Nature can counsel nothing but crime. It is this infallible Mother Nature who has created patricide and cannibalism, and a thousand other abominations that both shame and modesty prevent us from naming.[46]

Charles Baudelaire provocatively satirized the traditional identification of woman and nature: "Woman is the opposite of the dandy. Therefore she must inspire horror...Woman is natural, that is to say abominable."[47]

Moreau's *Oedipus and the Sphinx* (**fig. 3**) is a symbolist hieroglyph of the decadent view of sexuality and nature. The artist explained that the sphinx

represented the fatal attraction of the natural world, combining a head and wings promising the ideal, but the body of a monster below reveals the inevitable betrayal of physical pleasure.[48] Barbey d'Aurevilly enthusiastically praised the mixture of seductiveness and monstrousness in the sphinx in a review published immediately after it was shown in 1864.[49] This profound distrust of nature and the flesh has been linked to Gnostic beliefs by Julius Kaplan.[50]

The sufferings of the flesh were exemplified by the passion of Christ, but also shared by many Christian martyrs. Physical suffering was the price of redemption of the soul. This theme appealed to Moreau, who depicted St. Sebastian several times; an oil painting was shown in the Salon of 1876 (now in the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University), along with *Salome* (Armand Hammer Museum, University of California, Los Angeles). The nude St. Sebastian is shown tied to a tree, with an angel whispering to him (**fig. 4**). A glowing star and cross gleams overhead. Moreau celebrates the victory of the soul, and downplays the torture suffered by the saint, who is shown calmly listening to the voice of the angel. Several variants of this composition, including one given to Alexandrine Dureux, are titled *The Voices*, and show the poet Hesiod listening to the muses.[51] The martyred saint and the poet easily exchange places. Both are characterized by their unwavering devotion to high ideals, no matter the cost, and both listen to voices of inspiration, which can only be heard by the elect.

Moreau seemed to identify with poets, and frequently made them the subjects of his art, including Orpheus, Hesiod, Tyrtée, Arion, and Sappho.[52] The *Thracian Girl with Head of Orpheus* (Louvre, 1864) carries the silent head of the martyred poet/singer "piously" in the artist's words, echoing a Christian pieta.[53] It is an image of the artist rejected by society, but treasured by a few.

Classical and religious themes offered a vision of enduring truths to the artist. Only once did he make an attempt to deal with a contemporary issue, an allegory expressing the traumatic loss of the Franco-Prussian war, left abandoned after more than twenty unresolved studies.[54] Moreau remained in Paris during the Franco-Prussian conflict, largely because his deaf mother did not want to leave. The constant gunfire did not bother her.[55] Rouault's birth during the shelling of Paris was the first intersection of his life with Moreau.

In the years following the war, Moreau's most noted works were his images of the Biblical story of Salome, the fatal temptress who brought down the prophet John the Baptist. Two works, *Salome* and *The Apparition*, were shown in 1876 and 1878, rare public showings of his art.[56] The story of Salome is a multifaceted tale, which fit perfectly into the late nineteenth-century obsession with fatal women, but has many layers of meaning. Udo Kultermann has traced the historical roots of the story, noting that the dance of seven veils was a traditional dance of welcome and peace. He provocatively points out the parallel between the name Salome and the Hebrew word for peace, shalom.[57] Moreau's images of Salome could have had a political significance in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian war. Geneviève Lacambre suggests that the painting of Salome: "…would speak to the decadence of the period in historical and symbolic terms: Herod, a weak ruler, could stand for Napoleon III."[58] This symbolism is oblique, but the hypothesis is supported by the fact that Moreau himself once suggested that his image of *Jacob Wrestling with the Angel* (Fogg Art Museum, 1878) could represent France being stopped in its relentless pursuit of materialism.[59]

Moreau's images of Salome were canonized by J.-K. Huysmans in *À Rebours* in 1884. In the novel, two of Moreau's paintings are prized by the neurasthenic and aristocratic aesthete, Des Esseintes. Huysmans's lurid descriptions almost overwhelm the images, which are the embodiment of his decadent obsession with the sensual and spiritual world. Salome is not a mortal woman, but "the symbolic incarnation of undying Lust, the Goddess of immortal Hysteria"; she is "the monstrous Beast, indifferent, irresponsible, insensible, poisoning, like the Helen of ancient myth, everything that approaches her, everything that sees her, everything that she touches."[60]

A frequent theme in Moreau's work is the tension between the physical needs of the body and the drive for the mind and spirit to rise above these

limitations. Salome plays a negative, but necessary role in this drama of temptation and redemption. Salome is mysterious and undeniably fatal, and has the triple flaw of being female, Jewish, and physically enticing. She bewitches men through her sensuality and slow hieratic dance. A symbol of the allure of the pleasures of the flesh and materialism, she has also been seen as a reflection of anti-Semitism typical of the era.[61] Although Salome and Herod are Jews, Moreau's syncretic imagery transcends any one sect. He casts them in an imaginary realm, including statues of nearly every pagan deity worshipped in the Late Antique era: Artemis of Ephesus, Mithras, Etruscan deities, Isis, and others. The setting is heavily influenced by Islamic and Hindu architecture, and many costume and accessory details were inspired by Indian miniatures.[62] Moreau presents the conflict between Salome and John the Baptist as one between Christianity and all other faiths. He shared general anti-Semitic attitudes that were common at the time—his painting of the *Wandering Jew* (ca. 1890, Moreau Museum, Paris) portrays the legendary figure of the unbelieving Jew as suffering for his lack of faith.[63]

Salome first tried to keep John the Baptist earthbound with the sensual appeal of her body, and failing that, seduced Herod into destroying the obstinate saint. She was the embodiment of a negative spiritual force that used nature and sexuality to turn humans away from spiritual realities by ensnaring them with the allure of the physical world. Huysmans emphasized her role as a symbol of fate that transcended her Biblical origins:

> Viewed in this light, she belonged to the theogonies of the Far East; she no longer had her origin in Biblical tradition; she could not even be likened to the living image of Babylon, the royal harlot of Revelations, bedecked like herself with precious stones and purple robes, with paint and perfume, for the whore of Babylon was not thrust by a fateful power, by an irresistible force, into the alluring iniquities of debauch.[64]

Salome is not a free agent, but is also caught in the irresistible force of destiny and nature.

Eroticism and mysticism have often been intimately linked—the ecstasy of the body is a common metaphor for transcendental experience.[65] Moreau and Huysmans stress that Salome is a representative of a force larger than herself, a symbol of paganism and the lures of the flesh. Moreau commented on his painting of Salome, highlighting her spiritual character: "in my Salome, I wanted to portray the figure of a sibyl and religious enchantress with a mysterious character. I therefore conceived her costume which is like a reliquary."[66] Although Moreau's rejection of realism and the modern world was criticized by Émile Zola, who decried this "plunge into symbolism," he was immensely popular with more mystically inclined authors and artists.[67] Moreau kept his distance from the most public figures of the occult revival, declining the Rosicrucian Joséphin Péladan's entreaties to assume a leadership position in his Salons de la Rose+Croix, or even to exhibit there. Some of Moreau's private commentaries on his "mystical" contemporaries were quite harsh.[68]

Moreau depicted Salome dancing seductively to bend Herod to her will in several hypnotic paintings, and he also portrayed the aftermath of her fatal triumph. *The Apparition* focuses on the encounter of Salome with the severed head of John the Baptist (**fig. 5**). In Huysmans's evocative description, the decapitated head is "visible to Salome alone," and stares fixedly at her with "agonized concentration" as it floats in the air. Is she seeing a premonition of the future death of the saint, or is this a hallucination in the aftermath of his execution? John, the prophet and precursor to Christ, has risen, but not to full life. It is a perverse parody of the resurrection. The tense confrontation between Salome and the severed but living head of John the Baptist is an inversion of the relationship between Christ and Mary Magdalene in the resurrection scene known as *Noli me tangere*, where the luminous Christ appears to the Magdalene but warns her not to touch him. Moreau's scene, which is set in time before the passion of Christ, nonetheless prefigures one of its climactic scenes.[69] The dripping gore of the severed head adds a frisson of horror to this

Fig. 5. Gustave Moreau, *The Apparition*, ca. 1876. Oil on canvas. 22 x 18 2/5 in. Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University Art Museums, USA, Bequest of Grenville L. Winthrop / The Bridgeman Art Library

image. The transcendence of the saint is won at terrible cost. To live is to suffer, but the passage to the next world is traumatic. On another level, the fate of John the Baptist represents the ultimate male fear of woman, death, and castration. The popularity of the femme fatale in the nineteenth century is generally understood as a reflection of the anxieties produced by changing social roles the disorientation produced by the "new woman."[70] This electrifying confrontation of Salome and John belies the tender ministrations of the *Thracian Girl with the Head of Orpheus*.

Herod, unaware of the spiritual drama before him, is still maddened by his lust for her nearly naked body. Disconcertingly, Moreau implicates the viewer in this criminal obsession. Huysmans describes how his fictional art lover, Des Esseintes, was mesmerized by the sight of the dancer in the same way as Herod: "Like the old King, Des Esseintes invariably felt over-whelmed, subjugated, stunned when he looked at this dancing-girl, who was less majestic, less haughty, but more seductive than the Salome of the oil-painting." The gaze of Des Esseintes is irresistibly drawn to the nearly nude body of Salome, and he is trapped by his own sensual desires. Unlike Edouard Manet's notorious painting of the prostitute *Olympia* (Musée d'Orsay, 1863), however, the viewer's gaze is not returned or acknowledged.[71] The tableau is staged for us, but the protagonists are fully absorbed in their roles.

Des Esseintes and Herod both fear and love their destruction by the temptress Salome. Her power and independence horrify and attract them:

> Here she was a true harlot, obedient to her passionate and cruel female temperament; here she came to life, more refined yet more savage, more hateful yet more exquisite than before; here she roused the sleeping senses of the male more power-fully, subjugated his will more surely with her charms—the charms of a great venereal flower, grown in a bed of sacrilege, reared in a hot-house of impiety.[72]

The misogyny of this description verges on hysteria itself, as Huysmans loses himself in paroxysms of verbal ecstasy. Blaming the young dancer for the murder of John the Baptist allows Herod to evade responsibility for his own actions, and absolves the viewer from any vicarious guilt feelings.

There is ample evidence of Moreau's ambivalence and antipathy toward woman. Moreau's written note to Henri Rupp on his picture of *Salome in the Garden* (1878, private collection) flaunts a misogyny typical of the late nineteenth century. Commenting on the bored self-absorbed malevolence of Salome, he compared her to contemporary women: "When I want to render these fine nuances, I find them not in the subject, but in the nature of women in real life who seek unhealthy emotions and are too stupid even to understand the horror in the most dreadful situations."[73]

The lines between fiction and art often blur in Symbolism, but we should not mistake these representations for the entirety of Moreau's attitude to women. Natasha Grigorian perceptively detects

a moral dimension in Moreau's portrayal: "Blinded by Salome's sensuality, both the novelist and his hero fail to see the touchingly melancholy expression of the young girl's face, so delicate that it makes us realise both her vulnerability and the painter's pity for her."[74] Grigorian has looked closely at Moreau's paintings and detected an important note of sympathy.

In real life, Moreau was utterly devoted to two women: his mother Pauline (d. 1884), and Alexandrine Dureux (1835-1890), whom he met in 1859. She was his closest friend and confident for over twenty-five years; her death in 1890 was a terrible shock to him. Despite his attachment to Alexandrine, however, they never married. As with many in his generation, he felt that an artist needed to preserve his independence and remain unmarried to fulfill his commitment to art.[75] Nonetheless, Moreau's friend Henri Rupp described Alexandrine as his soul-sister, and lamented that Moreau lost half of himself at her death.[76] She was buried in Montmartre cemetery in a tomb designed by Moreau, ornamented with their interlocking initials, A and G. After her death, Moreau expressed his despair to Henri Rupp:

> God is cruel to artists like the bird keeper to the bird, gouging out their eyes so that they might sing better…While renouncing all joy after so many cruel losses, I give in, not only to an imperious need of my soul, but I consider this renunciation like a moral offering that I carry to those disappeared loved ones, proof, an ever perceptible testimony for them of my profound fidelity to their memory.[77]

How can one reconcile Moreau's heartrending expression with his earlier misogynistic declarations? The ways of the heart are mysterious, and perhaps one can only say that he was as conflicted as many men of his generation.

The cruel image of the songbird mutilated for the sake of its song is a poignant image of the artist suffering for his art, and is unfortunately based on real practice. The Dutch emblem book writer and poet Jacob Cats described blindness as a "gift from God" for the finches whose singing was thus improved, and for centuries French and Flemish songbird competitions featured finches that had been blinded to enhance their song.[78] Such a finch singing contest was described by Émile Zola in *Germinal* in 1885.[79] The practice was ended in 1920 after a public campaign by blinded veterans from World War I.[80] Perhaps thinking of Moreau's plaint, or the recent campaign to end the cruel practice on Flemish songbirds, Georges Rouault inscribed the phrase "A l'oiseau bleu / crève les yeux / il chantera mieux" on a portrait of the popular actress *Maria Lani*, or the *Bluebird* in 1928.[81] In this linkage of art and suffering Moreau and Rouault share common ground with the Norwegian artist Edvard Munch, who himself spanned Symbolism and Expressionism. In 1890, Munch wrote: "I do not believe in an art which has not forced its way out through man's need to open his heart. All art, literature, as well as music must be brought about with our heart blood. Art is our heart blood."[82] This doctrine was embodied in the allegorical image *The Flower of Pain* (Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, 1898; see Blumberg essay, fig. 3). Munch's woodcut depicts a nude man in the pose of Rodin's *Age of Bronze* (Musée d'Orsay, 1876; see Blumberg essay, fig. 1) who leans back as blood pours from his chest, streaming out to nourish a large flower that grows in front of him.[83] It is an image of self-sacrifice, with the artist giving his life to create beauty. To be an artist in the modern world is a kind of martyrdom. There is a powerful undercurrent of sorrow mixed with beauty in nearly all of Moreau's works.

In the aftermath of his personal losses, Gustave Moreau found solace in teaching as well as his art. He reluctantly became a teacher late in life, taking over the atelier of his friend Élie Delaunay at the École des Beaux-Arts after his death in 1891.[84] His pedagogical style was characterized by his respect for the individual goals and abilities of his students, and he attracted pupils as diverse as Henri Matisse, Albert Marquet, and the Belgian Henri Evenepoel. By all accounts, however, his favorite student was Georges Rouault, who seemed destined to carry on the spirit of Moreau's work. In 1941, Matisse reminisced to Pierre Courthion about Moreau's atelier:

> The students were divided into several groups; those who were working for official honors and those who worked independently; others, the ones who got discouraged, didn't work much; and lastly, there were those who really worked well, enthusiasts such as Rouault and Maxence. The latter were placed at the back. In the middle were a few independents and, near the door, the rowdies.[85]

Rouault's early works, such as the *Christ Among the Doctors* of 1894 (Musée Unterlinden, Colmar) clearly show his early dependence on Moreau's example.[86] Late works such as Rouault's *Head of John the Baptist* (1933; **no. 37**) demonstrate the persistence of this influence.

The continuity between the aims of Moreau and Rouault was underscored in a recent article by Cristina Scassellati Cooke: "Indeed, in his subsequent career, not only in his religious subjects, but also in his depictions of judges and prostitutes, Rouault managed to express, with a characteristic gravity, a commentary on humanity that ultimately derives from the universality of history painting."[87] This was not an easy path. Rouault later quoted Moreau's praise and his prediction for the future of his student:

> I should like to have seen you one of these past evenings and to have expressed to you my great satisfaction that you have been able to obtain a reward at the Salon (however small it might have been) without the slightest word of recommendation. That is very fine. I need not tell you that I consider that payment infinitely beneath what you deserve, for your picture was for me one of the very few really fine things in the exhibition, but we must accustom ourselves to great modesty and to remain happy with the little we are granted. You are one of those whose career will be very difficult, but in return, I sincerely trust, much honored and full of light.[88]

Rouault built upon Moreau's example of spiritual dedication and recognition of the deep sorrows of life, but extended a degree of sympathy to his depictions of sinners and prostitutes that was lacking in Gustave Moreau's symbolist art. The tragic dimensions of human life evoked empathy in Rouault that the older master either could not achieve or was unable to express so overtly. Rouault loved the grotesque, which he found emblematic of the human condition. Moreau struggled with the same problems of the mind-body relationship, but could not bring himself to embrace the fullness of life in the same way. Their respective approaches to issues of sensuality, shame and the sufferings of the flesh make clear the shared legacy of nineteenth-century Symbolism and twentieth-century Modernism, but also reveals the chasm between them.

My thanks to Stephen Schloesser, S.J., for his boundless enthusiasm for Moreau and Rouault. Thanks also to Maura Lucking, my Boston College undergraduate research assistant, for her assistance with this essay.

Endnotes

1 Pierre-Louis Mathieu, *Gustave Moreau* (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1976) 233.

2 James Thrall Soby, *Georges Rouault: Paintings and Prints* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1945) 35. Stephen Schloesser brought this quote to my attention.

3 Marcus Binney, "The spirit behind a Paris staircase, Musée Gustave Moreau," *Country Life* 196.13 (March 28, 2002) 74-77.

4 Pierre-Louis Mathieu, *Gustave Moreau* (Paris: Flammarion, 1994) 222.

5 Max Nordau, *Degeneration (1892)* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1895). See also George Frederick Drinka, M.D., *The Birth of Neurosis. Myth, Malady and the Victorians* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984).

6 Sharon Hirsh, *Symbolism in Modern Urban Society* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2004).

7 Joris-Karl Huysmans, "Le Salon Officiel de 1880," *L'art moderne / Certains* (Paris: Union Générale d'éditions, 1975) 144. "M. Gustave Moreau est une artiste extraordinaire, unique. C'est une mystérieux enfermé, en plein Paris, dans une cellule où ne pénètre même plus la bruit de la vie contemporaine qui bat furieusement pourtant du cloitre. Abimé dans l'extase, il voit resplendir les féeriques visions, les sanglantes apothéoses des autres âges."

8 Degas qtd. in Jean Paladilhe and Jose Pierre, *Gustave Moreau* (New York and Washington: Praeger, 1972) 92.

9 Huysmans' review of Moreau exhibit in *Certains* (1889) 17-20. Qtd. in Sharon Hirsh, *Symbolism in Modern Urban Society* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2004) 61.

10 Pierre Courthion, *Georges Rouault* (New York: Abrams, 1977) 41-42.

11 Courthion 36.

12 Ernest Chesneau, *Les Nations rivales dans l'art*, 1868; qtd. in Geneviève Lacambre, *Gustave Moreau, Magic and Symbols* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1997) 41.

13 Peter Cooke, ed. *Ecrits sur l'art par Gustave Moreau*, vol. II (Fontroide: Fata Morgana, 2002) 211.

14 Gustave Courbet, qtd. in Linda Nochlin, *Realism* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1972) 82.

15 The *Mystic Flower* depicts a giant Madonna bearing a cross and a lily and surrounded by adoring saints, seated on a giant flower stalk rising above a rocky landscape. It strongly resembles Hans Memling's *Allegory with a Virgin* (Musée Jacquemart-André, Paris, 1479-80).

16 Moreau qted. in Paladilhe and Pierre 65.

17 Moreau actually described the artist as a writer: "L'artiste se dédouble et écrit pour la Terre et pour le Ciel." Qtd. in Pamela A. Genova, *Symbolist Journals; A Culture of Correspondence* (Aldershot, England and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002) 189. Moreau's quote is from a discussion of Michelangelo's somnambulic figures; full text in Cooke, *Ecrits sur l'art par Gustave Moreau* II 305-06 (Arch. GM 127).

18 For more on this double vision in Decadent art, see Stephen Schloesser, S.J., "From Spiritual Naturalism to Psychical Naturalism: Catholic Decadence, Lutheran Munch, and Madone Mystérique," *Edvard Munch: Psyche, Symbol, Expression*, ed. Jeffery Howe (Chestnut Hill: McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College, 2001) 81-89. Also, Suzanne M. Singletary, "Jacob Wrestling with the Angel: A Theme in Symbolist Art," *Nineteenth-Century French Studies* 32.3-4 (Spring-Summer 2004): 298-315.

19 Courthion 36.

20 See Mary Cullinane, "Guilt by Association: Gustave Moreau, the Unwilling Decadent," *Art Criticism* 17.1 (2001) 55-72. Also Natasha Grigorian, "The writings of J.-K. Huysmans and *Gustave Moreau*'s painting: affinity or divergence?" *Nineteenth-century French Studies* 32.3-4 (Summer 2004): 282-97.

21 Moreau insisted: "Les productions en peinture étant plutôt faites pour être senties qu'expliquées, on risquerait trop à vouloir emprisonner la pensée libre du spectateur dans une formule définitive." Cited in Genova 182.

22 Moreau wrote to Goldschmidt: "Voici ce que vous désirez.... Ne communiquez, je vous prie, cela à personne. J'ai déjà trop souffert dans toute ma vie d'artiste de cette opinion imbécile et injuste que je suis trop littéraire pour un peintre. Tout ce que je vous écris la pour vous être agréable ne demande pas à être exprimé ni expliqué par des paroles. Le sens de cette peinture pour qui sait un peu lire dans une création plastique est extrêmement clair et limpide. Il faut absolument aimer, un peu rêver et ne pas se

contenter dans une œuvre d'imagination, sous prétexte de simplicité et de clarté, de naïveté ou d'un simple ba, be, bi, bo, bu, écœurant." Qtd. in Genova 181.

23 Peter Cooke, *Gustave Moreau et les arts jumeaux, Peinture et littérature aux dix-neuvième siècle* (Oxford, Bern and New York: Peter Lang, 2003) 187.

24 Cooke, *Ecrits sur l'art par Gustave Moreau* I, 121: "Sans doute il ne faudrait pas que le peintre affirme à la manière de l'écrivain: ce serait absurde. Aussi est-il nécessaire que la pensée du peintre, quelque nette, quelque profonde, quelque forte qu'elle soit, ait toujours pour la protéger et pour lui conserver son vrai caractère une enveloppe mystérieuse qui déconcerte le spectateur et le tienne à distance respectueuse." (Arch. GM 338.) Moreau was also concerned for the freedom of the spectator: "nous nous livrons à des interprétations diverses et nous craignons de ne pas pénétrer complètement votre pensée." Cooke, *Gustave Moreau et les arts jumeaux* 114.

25 Marshall Berman, *All that is Sold Melts into Air, The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982).

26 As early as 1937, Meyer Schapiro identified a social and moral dimension to Impressionism; see his essay "The Nature of Abstract Art," *Modern Art. 19th and 20th Centuries, Selected Papers* (New York: George Braziller, 1978) 185-211.

27 Ellis Hanson, *Decadence and Catholicism* (Cambridge MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1997).

28 J.-K. Huysmans, 1903 preface, *Against the Grain* (New York: Illustrated Editions, 1931) 72-73.

29 Gustave Moreau in Cooke, *Ecrits sur l'art par Gustave Moreau* I, 163. Translation mine; original French: "Croyez-vous en Dieu? Je ne crois qu'à lui seul. Je ne crois ni à ce que je touche, ni à ce que je vois. Je ne crois qu' à ce que je ne vois pas et uniquement à ce que je sens. Mon cerveau, ma raison me semblent éphémères et d'une réalité douteuse; mon sentiment intérieur seul me parait éternel, incontestablement certain."

30 Courthion 42. Peter Cooke lists the editions of Pascal's *Pensées* owned by Moreau in *Ecrits sur l'art par Gustave Moreau* II, 358.

31 Claude Lesné, et al. *Philippe de Champaigne et Port-Royal* (Musée Nationale des Granges de Port-Royal, 1995). See also Bernard Dorival, "L'Ex-Voto de 1662 par Philippe De Champaigne," *Revue Du Louvre et des Musées De France* 23.6 (1973) 337-348, and Olan A. Rand, Jr. "Philippe de Champaigne and the Ex-Voto of 1662: A Historical Perspective," *Art Bulletin* XLV.1 (March 1983) 77-93.

32 Edgar Degas qtd. by Paul Valery; cited in Cooke, *Gustave Moreau et les arts jumeaux* 24.

33 Edgar Degas, letter to Gustave Moreau from Florence, September 21 1858, in Theodore Reff, "More Unpublished Letters of Degas," *Art Bulletin* 51:3 (September 1969) 281. "…je lis avec intérêt les *Lettres Provinciales* où le moi est recommandé comme haïssable." Reff notes that Degas had already read Pascal in the Lycée. Four letters to Moreau are printed pages 281-86.

34 Gustave Moreau, letter dated August 21, 1893 from Evian. Letter scanned by Gilles Rouault, emailed to Stephen Schloesser. Original French: "la connaissance humaine est pareille à une sphère qui grossirait sans cesse, à mesure qu'augmente son volume, grandit le nombre des points de contact avec l'inconnu (Pascal)." Also qtd. by Rouault in the special issue of *L'Art et Les Artistes* dedicated to Gustave Moreau (no. 66, April 1926) 231-232.

35 Gustave Moreau in Cooke, *Ecrits sur l'art par Gustave Moreau* I, 164. Translation mine; original French: "Ne cherchons pas Dieu autre part que dans cette influence mystérieuse qui nous fait aimer ce qui est en dehors de la vie, le sacrifice, l'effort sans récompense, et qui nous fait comprendre l'amour et la charité, ces deux essences divines et supraterrestres. Dieu est cet incessant parfum de notre âme, ce qui nous donne le sens du non-sens de la vie."

36 Gustave Moreau in Cooke, *Ecrits sur l'art par Gustave Moreau* II, 362. Translation mine; original French: "L'art est, après la charité, bien après la charité chrétienne, l'unique moyen pour l'homme d'exprimer ce qu'il y a de sacré et de divin en lui dans un langage mystérieux sans cesse renouvelé bien qu'aux lois inflexibles, sublimes et providentielles. Il ne faudrait donc pas faire fi de cela, quelque philosophe ou religieux que l'on puisse être."

37 André Breton discovered the Musée Moreau when he was a teenager : "The discovery of the museum, when I was sixteen years old, determined for a long time my idea of love. It was there that beauty and love

were revealed through the poses of certain women and certain women's faces – the spell was complete." Qtd. in Wayne Andrews, *The Surrealist Parade* (New York: New Directions Press, 1990) 64. Georges Bataille included Moreau in his 1961 study on the links between violence and the sacred, *The Tears of Eros* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1989).

38 Gustave Moreau in Cooke, *Ecrits sur l'art par Gustave Moreau* I, 53. Original French: "Une seule chose domine chez moi, l'entrainement et l'ardeur la plus grande vers l'abstraction. L'expression des sentiments humains, des passions de l'homme m'intéresse sans doute vivement, mais je suis moins porté à exprimer ces mouvements de l'âme et de l'esprit qu'à rendre pour ainsi dire visibles les éclairs intérieurs qu'on ne sait à quoi rattacher, qui ont quelque chose de divin dans leur apparente insignifiance et qui, traduits par les merveilleux effets de la pure plastique, ouvrent des horizons vraiment magiques et je dirai même sublimes."

39 Scott C. Allan, "Interrogating Gustave Moreau's Sphinx: Myth as Artistic Metaphor in the 1864 Salon," *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide,* vol. 7, 1 (Spring 2008); online journal: http://www.19thc-artworldwide.org/spring_08/articles/alla.shtml.

40 Cooke, *Gustave Moreau et les arts jumeaux* 219.

41 Ary Renan used the term "beautiful inertia" in 1899; Moreau scholar Peter Cooke prefers "l'immobilité contemplative." *Gustave Moreau et les arts jumeaux* 107.

42 Gustave Moreau in Cooke, *Ecrits sur l'art par Gustave Moreau II,* 305-06: "Toutes les figures de Michel-Ange semblent être fixées dans un geste de somnambulisme idéal… Absorption de l'individu par le rêve." (Arch. GM 127)

43 The allegorical interpretation of classical mythology is traced by Jean Seznec, *The Survival of the Pagan Gods* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1972). Renaissance Neoplatonism is the subject of many studies, especially Edgar Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance* (London: 1958), and E.H. Gombrich, *Symbolic Images: Studies in the Art of the Renaissance* (London: Phaidon, 1972).

44 Julius Kaplan, *Gustave Moreau* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1974) 32, 52. See also: H.R. Rookmaaker, *Gauguin and 19th Century Art Theory* (Amsterdam: Swets and Zeitlinger, 1972).

45 Anthony Blunt, *Artistic Theory in Italy 1450-1600* (London, Oxford and New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1973) 45-47, 60, 70-72.

46 "The Painter of Modern Life," *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays* (1863), trans. and ed., Jonathan Mayne (New York: Da Capo Press, 1986) 32-33. Qtd. in Patricia Mathews, *Passionate Discontent: Creativity, Gender, and French Symbolist Art* (Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1999) 95.

47 Charles Baudelaire, *Oeuvres Complètes,* 1207; cited in Camille Paglia, *Sexual Personae. Art and decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson (*New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1990) 430.

48 Mathieu (1976) 84. The original quote is found in Cooke, *Ecrits sur l'art par Gustave Moreau I,* 73. "C'est la Chimère terrestre, vile comme la matière, attractive comme elle, représentée [par] cette tête charmante de la femme, avec les ailes encore prometteuses de l'idéal et le corps du monstre, du carnassier qui déchire et anéantit."

49 Barbey d'Aurevilly wrote in the May 1864 issue of *Annales de la Charité (La Revue de l'Economie Chrétienne)* "Ce n'est plus le bon Sphinx égyptien accroupi immobile sur le piédestal de granit rose.... C'est le Sphinx grec, moitié femme, moitié vautour, séducteur comme la sirène, et implacable comme le monstre prométhéen.... Cette œuvre se détache du fond des vulgarités dont abonde l'exposition. Ici, tout est travaillé, étudié, modelé." Qtd. in Genova 184.

50 Julius Kaplan, *The Art of Gustave Moreau: Theory, Style, and Content* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1982) 198.

51 Geneviève Lacambre, et al. *Gustave Moreau: Between Epic and Dream,* catalogue of exhibition (Paris and Chicago, 1999) 172.

52 Cooke, *Gustave Moreau et les arts jumeaux* 80-81.

53 This work, purchased by the state and shown in the Luxembourg museum was the only painting by Moreau continuously available to the public in the nineteenth century. Cooke, *Gustave Moreau et les arts jumeaux* 83-84.

54 Noted by Peter Cooke in *Ecrits sur l'art par Gustave Moreau* I, 82.

55 Mathieu (1994) 113. Moreau joined the national guard in 1870, but was discharged because of an infirmity in his shoulder, articular arthritis that eventually

led to paralysis of his left arm. He remained in Paris through the period of the Commune, leaving in July 1871 for Néris-les-bains for a cure for his arm. See Lacambre, et al. *Gustave Moreau: Between Epic and Dream,* 285

56 His last exhibit at the Salon was in 1880; in 1881 and 1886 Moreau showed his watercolors of the Fables of LaFontaine at the galleries of Durand-Ruel and Goupil. In 1889 he took part in the centennial exhibition of French art in 1889, showing his *Young Man and Death* and *Galatea*. See Peter Cooke, *Gustave Moreau et les arts jumeaux* 61.

57 Udo Kultermann, "The 'Dance of the Seven Veils.' Salome and Erotic Culture around 1900," *Artibus et historiae* 27.53 (2006) 187-215.

58 Lacambre, et al. 115.

59 Cooke, *Ecrits sur l'art par Gustave Moreau* I, 111. Arch. GM 378. Carnet of 1876-77. "J'étonnais beaucoup Destouches en lui disant que, par une singulière coïncidence venant en somme de ce que l'artiste véritable ne fait que traduire les mouvements de son âme, mes sujets pouvaient être le symbole des événements et des aspirations ainsi que des cataclysmes présents. Le Jacob serait l'ange de la France l'arrêtant dans sa course idiote vers la matière. Le Moise, l'espérance dans une nouvelle loi représentée par ce mignon d'enfant innocent et poussé par Dieu. Le David, la sombre mélancolie de l'âge passé et la tradition si chère aux grands esprits pleurant sur la grande décomposition moderne, l'ange à ses pieds prêt à rendre l'inspiration si on consent à écouter Dieu. Il était fort étonné de la vérité de ces symboles."

60 Joris-Karl Huysmans, *Against Nature*, tr. Robert Baldick (London and New York: Penguin, 1959) 65-66.

61 Cooke, *Gustave Moreau et les arts jumeaux* 132. For a general discussion of anti-Semitism in the late nineteenth century, see Laura Morowitz, "Anti-Semitism, Medievalism and the Art of the Fin-de-Siècle," *Oxford Art Journal* 20.1 (1997) 35-49. See also Daniel Grojnowski, "Salome, l'art et l'argent," *Huysmans*, eds. Pierre Brunel and André Guyaux (Paris: Editions de l'Herne, 1985) 165-173. Sander L. Gilman, "Salome, Syphilis, Sarah Bernhardt and the 'Modern Jewess,'" *The German Quarterly* 66.2 (Spring 1993): 195-211, brings the focus into the twentieth century in Germany.

62 See *L'Inde de Gustave Moreau,* catalog of exhibition (Paris: Musée Cernuschi, 1997) 106-21. Huysmans in *Against Nature* 66 notes that "the painter seemed to wish to assert his intention of remaining outside the bounds of time, of giving no precise indication of race or country or period…"

63 Gustave Moreau, *Ecrits sur l'art par Gustave Moreau* I, 135: "Le Juif errant. Un soir, après la marche de la journée, il aperçoit au détour du chemin une croix de fer! Il s'arrête éperdu, terrifié, envahi d'angoisse, mais il ne peut revenir sur ses pas. Il faut qu'il marche. Tremblant, se soutenant à peine, il avance, il veut détourner son regard de cette chose qui se dresse rigide devant lui, il approche. Oh miracle, sublime apparition ! Cette image du Christ s'anime, le fer devient chair, le visage rayonne, bien que pâle, triste et douloureux encore, le sang coule de la couronne d'épines, des mains, des pieds encloués et du côté percé de la lance. Cependant les bras s'ouvrent en un geste de tendre appel, la tête se penche comme pour un baiser et le geste de pardon, de miséricorde, fait tomber à genoux et baigné de larmes et d'amour, le voyageur maudit qui, prosterné, adore enfin son Dieu." (note dated 8 novembre 97, Arch. GM 2)

64 Huysmans, *Against Nature* 66.

65 A point emphasized by Jeffrey J. Kripal in review of *Sensible Ecstasy: Mysticism, Sexual Difference, and the Demands of History* by Amy Hollywood, *The Journal of Religion* 83.4 (October 2003) 593-98.

66 Grigorian 286-87. Translation mine; original French: "dans ma Salomé, je voulais rendre une figure de sibylle et d'enchanteresse religieuse avec un caractère de mystère. J'ai alors conçu le costume qui est comme une châsse."

67 In an article on Moreau in *The Messenger of Europe*, a Russian periodical published in Moscow, 1876, Zola wrote: "I shall have noted all the curiosities of modern painting when I have dealt with Gustave Moreau, whom I have left to the last as being the most astonishing example of the extravagances into which an artist can fall in the search for originality and the hatred of realism. It was inevitable that contemporary naturalism and the efforts of art to study nature should call forth a reaction and bring forward artists with an idealistic turn of mind. This

retrograde movement, in the realms of the imagination, is particularly interesting in the case of Gustave Moreau. He has not taken refuge in Romanticism, as one would have imagined; he scorns the romantic fever, the too-easy use of colour, those haphazard strokes of the brush, which cover the canvas with effects of light and shade until you are quite blinded. No, Gustave Moreau has plunged into symbolism. He paints pictures partly composed of riddles; rediscovers archaic or primitive forms; takes Mantegna as his model; and affords an enormous importance to the minutest details of his pictures. His method becomes understandable if I describe the last two pictures that he has shown this year. The subject of the first is *Hercules and the Lernean Hydra*... His second picture, *Salome*, is even more bizarre… His talent consists in taking subjects which have already been dealt with by other artists and altering them, treating them more ingeniously. He paints his dreams, not simple, naive dreams such as we all have, but sophisticated, complicated, enigmatic dreams which are difficult to understand immediately. What value can such art have in these days? It is a question which I find it difficult to reply to. It seems to me, as I have already said, to be an outright reaction against the modern world. Painting is in no great danger from this movement. One shrugs one's shoulders and passes on, that is all there is to say." Qtd. in Robert Delevoy, *Symbolists and Symbolism* (New York: Skira/Rizzolli, 1978) 40.

68 Gustave Moreau in Cooke, *Ecrits sur l'art par Gustave Moreau* II, 326: "Jamais on n'a pu voir une génération, une jeunesse aux instincts, aux gouts, aux mœurs plus positifs, et jamais on n'a vu de pareils enthousiasmes pour l'invisible, des besoins aussi exclusifs de rêve, de mystère, de mysticisme, de symbolisme et de non défini. Quel snobisme! Quelle pose, quel horrible cabotinisme, charlatanisme et crétinisme! Et ils croient vous en imposer et vous faire admirer leur goût exquis, rare et unique!"

69 Typological symbolism was a mainstay of Biblical interpretation, and still had wide currency in the nineteenth century; it was a key principle for the Pre-Raphaelites. See George P. Landow, *William Holman Hunt and Typological Symbolism* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1979).

70 To cite only one study, Shearer West, *Fin de Siècle: Art and Society in an Age of Uncertainty* (London: Bloomsbury and New York: Overlook Press, 1993).

71 John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (New York: Viking, 1973); Hollis Clayson, *Painted Love, Prostitution in French Art of the Impressionist Era* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2003).

72 Huysmans, *Against Nature* 68.

73 Gustave Moreau in Cooke, *Ecrits sur l'art par Gustave Moreau* I, 101. Translation mine; original French: "Quand je veux rendre ces nuances-la, je les trouve non pas dans mon sujet, mais dans la nature même de la femme dans la vie, qui cherche les émotions malsaines et qui, stupide, ne comprend même pas l'horreur des situations les plus affreuses."

74 Grigorian 287.

75 Mathieu (1994) 157-161.

76 Mathieu (1994) 160. "Elle lui avait tout donné. Il lui avait tout rendu. Elle emportait une moitié de lui-même."

77 Moreau qtd. in Dorothy Kosinski, *Orpheus in Nineteenth-Century Symbolism* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1989) 152.

78 According to the website of the National Vinkensport Museum in Belgium near Kortrijk (Courtrai), "Ook Jacob Cats (Nederlands dichter 1577-1660) geroemd om zijn poëtische levenswijsheid schreef een gedicht over de verblinde vink die beter zong als een geschenk van God." The first recorded finch singing contest was held in Ypres in 1595. http://www.harelbeke.be/. Accessed March 17, 2008

79 Emile Zola, *Germinal* (1885), part 3, ch. 2: "Then, as they arrived before another bar, the Tête-Coupée, it occurred to Chaval to take his sweetheart in to a competition of chaffinches which had been announced on the door for the past week. Fifteen nail-makers from the Marchiennes nail works had responded to the appeal, each with a dozen cages; and the gloomy little cages in which the blinded finches sat motionless were already hung upon a paling in the inn yard. It was a question as to which, in the course of an hour, should repeat the phrase of its song the greatest number of times. Each nail-maker with a slate stood near his cages to mark, watching his neighbours and watched by them. And the chaffinches had begun, the *chichouïeux* with the deeper note, the *batisecouics* with their shriller note, all at first timid,

and only risking a rare phrase, then, excited by each other's songs, increasing the pace; then at last carried away by such a rage of rivalry that they would even fall dead. The nail-makers violently whipped them on with their voices, shouting out to them in Walloon to sing more, still more, yet a little more, while the spectators, about a hundred people, stood by in mute fascination in the midst of this infernal music of a hundred and eighty chaffinches all repeating the same cadence out of time. It was a *batisecouic* which gained the first prize, a metal coffee-pot." Online version. http://www.ibiblio.org/eldritch/ez/g32.html. Accessed March 17, 2008

80 Dan Bilefsky, "One-Ounce Belgian Idols Vie for Most Tweets Per Hour," *New York Times*, May 21, 2007; http://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/21/world/europe/21finch.html?r=1&oref=slogin. Accessed March 17, 2008

81 Translated, the inscription reads: "To the bluebird / put out its eyes / it will sing better." Rouault made five portraits of Maria Lani; one is now in the Art Institute of Chicago. The work and Rouault's inscription were brought to my attention by Stephen Schoesser, S.J. *The Bluebird* (1908) was the most famous play by the Nobel prize winning Belgian author, Maurice Maeterlinck (1862-1949). Maria Lani was "Born in Warsaw, trained in Max Reinhardt's School of Theater in Berlin, and a member of the Théatre Gaston Baty in Paris, Madame Lani had a kind of endlessly changing beauty, which fascinated artists of the School of Paris. In 1929 a New York gallery invited fifty-one of them to portray the actress." Clare Vincent, "In Search of a Likeness: Some European Portrait Sculpture," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin,* New Series, 24.8 (April 1966) 253.

82 Munch Museum, ms. N 29; qtd. in *Edvard Munch, Symbols & Images* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1978) 154.

83 Illustrated in *Edvard Munch, Psyche, Symbol and Expression* no. 12.

84 Mathieu (1976) 211.

85 Courthion 37.

86 Cristina Scassellati Cooke, "L'Enfant Jésus parmi les Docteurs par Georges Rouault au Musée d'Unterlinden à Colmar," *Revue du Louvre et des musées de France* 43.1 (1993) 50-57.

87 Cristina Scassellati Cooke, "The ideal of history painting: Georges Rouault and other students of Gustave Moreau at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Paris, 1892-98," *The Burlington Magazine* 148 (May 2006) 339.

88 Qtd. by Frank Anderson Trapp, "The Atelier Gustave Moreau," *Art Journal* 22.2 (Winter 1962-1963) 95. Trapp is quoting Georges Rouault, "Lettres de Georges Rouault à André Suarès," *L'Art et les artistes XIII.* 65-69 (March 1926–July 1926) 234.

Erasing Time and Place: Rouault and "Medieval" Art

Virginia Reinburg

The roots of Rouault's affinity for the medieval were many. He apprenticed to a stained-glass maker, working at the craft for about two years while he took evening classes in drawing at the École des Arts Décoratifs. He turned to Catholicism in his twenties, during an era of nostalgia for the devotions and invented traditions of medieval Christianity. And from the time he entered the École des Beaux-Arts, Rouault was surrounded by artists and writers attracted to the medieval. He was a student of Gustave Moreau, whose paintings incorporated myths and motifs from Egyptian, classical, and medieval art. Later, Rouault's friends included the Catholic writers Joris-Karl Huysmans, Léon Bloy, and Jacques and Raïssa Maritain. Huysmans "lived in the past," Rouault wrote.[1] And Bloy had "a profound affection for the Middle Ages," Jacques Maritain noted.[2] Bloy introduced Rouault to the Maritains, who were later his neighbors when both families lived in Versailles. Recent converts to Catholicism, the Maritains were absorbed in reading Thomas Aquinas's theology. Later, Jacques Maritain embarked on a project of creating an "ultramodern" synthesis of Thomism and modernism.[3] Rouault was surrounded by people attracted to the Middle Ages and neo-medievalism. If we judge by the company he kept, Rouault's medievalism was overdetermined.

But how much does medievalism explain about Rouault? Medieval images, forms, and techniques have been detected in his art. What could be more "medieval" than an illustrated *Passion* series? Or an illustrated book with the liturgical title *Miserere*? Rouault's work actually recalls art that post-dates the Middle Ages: the *Passion* series created by Martin Schongauer (1448-91) and Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528), and the so-called European "Primitive" paintings and graphic arts of the early modern period (ca. 1420-1520). Rouault's "archaic" and "religious" works—especially those created after 1902—have been considered "medieval" at least in part because within the Catholic revivalist movement typified by Huysmans, "medieval" became a synonym for "devout" and "authentically Catholic." Today the term "medieval" sometimes serves as code for "Catholic." In short, the medieval has been—and continues to be—a site of memory for Catholicism.[4]

Rouault lived in several worlds inflected by medievalism. But medievalisms were not all the same. Moreover, the worlds of traditionalist Catholics, Catholic modernists, Symbolists, and Decadents overlapped, but also on occasion conflicted. In this essay I suggest how we might think about Rouault's murky medievalism. This is a difficult task given the poetic, elliptical character of Rouault's writings.[5] And the works of art resist singular meanings. This is particularly true of the post-1902 works, which are decidedly

modern, yet tinged with something archaic, or "medieval." Essential to Rouault's Catholic modernism was the way he worked with the medieval. Some have argued that the modernist turn in Rouault's art was rooted in his personal experience. Undoubtedly Rouault's grief and the moral crisis he endured after Moreau's death shaped his art. Yet Rouault also absorbed ideas, images, and discourses swirling around him in the worlds of art, culture, politics, and Catholicism.

Moreau's Student

Rouault learned to love Rembrandt, Manet, and especially Daumier from his grandfather, who collected inexpensive prints of works by the great masters. And when he became Moreau's student, Rouault had already worked in stained glass, taken drawing classes, and been admitted to Élie Delaunay's Beaux-Arts studio. Moreau—his "dear master," his "spiritual father"—gave Rouault gifts that stayed with him for a lifetime. Some were personal. Moreau was an encouraging mentor, not a judgmental, demanding critic like most Beaux-Arts masters. He was "not a professor in the usual sense of the word," Rouault later wrote.[6] "He defended us courageously in the competitions."[7] (Some of Moreau's Beaux-Arts colleagues thought him too permissive.[8]) Surviving in the art world was a harsh business. Moreau's warm support (which was, however, not without an occasionally sharp critique) gave his students the confidence to persevere, not to mention the necessary connections to patrons and galleries.[9]

Beyond Moreau's kind counsel, however, Rouault learned much from his teacher. Moreau's mysterious, erudite paintings drew from a variety of cultural sources, and boldly mixed motifs and stories in a way that blurred history and geography. Rouault absorbed his master's wide-ranging, learned approach, including Moreau's passion for Baudelaire's poetry, and Egyptian, Byzantine, and medieval art. Rouault also learned from Moreau that the artist's vocation ideally amounted to a sacred trust. Both lessons provide ways of understanding Rouault's medievalism.

Moreau was an intellectual, avidly interested in the arts, history, and literature. "He was interested in everything," Rouault wrote.[10] Although he traveled little, he gathered images and ideas from everywhere. He had a large collection of photographs and the illustrated revues (*Magasin Pittoresque, L'Art Pour Tous*) so popular in the second half of the nineteenth century. His library included volumes of engravings, drawings, and chromolithographs intended as references for artists, decorators, and scholars.[11] Among these was Nicolas Xavier Willemin's *Monuments Français Inédits* (1839), a two-volume illustrated anthology of art, architecture, and decor ranging from the sixth to the seventeenth centuries, from which Moreau drew for many of his works.[12] Moreau also haunted Paris museums and libraries, especially the Louvre, the Musée de Cluny, and the manuscript and print rooms of the Bibliothèque Nationale. Museums were full of artists and visitors sketching and copying. The 1904 Baedeker guide advised, "Persons desiring to copy in the Louvre or Luxembourg apply to the Administration des Musées.... The conditions and regulations are posted up in the various galleries."[13] Moreau and his students copied voraciously in museums. Moreau also filled his sketchbooks by copying from books.[14]

Moreau's erudition extended beyond decor, beyond artistic forms, to symbol and iconography. His library and portfolios were stuffed with books, photographs, and sketches drawn from the myths, symbols, and arts of many cultures, including medieval Europe, but extending as well to Asian and Middle Eastern cultures. Moreau lived in a rich era for iconography, a quasi-intellectual discipline created by archeologists, art historians, liturgists, orientalists, and everyone who studied inscriptions, antiquities, monuments, and ancient texts.[15] Iconography, married to Baudelaire's poetry, was the anchor of Moreau's art, sometimes called "symbolist."[16] And in many ways Rouault was the heir to Moreau's Symbolism. He also became a learned and eager gleaner of images and ideas.

At first glance, Moreau's literary, esoteric paintings seem radically different from Rouault's art. Fabrice Hergott argues that it was Moreau's free, experimental approach to form that influenced

Rouault, more than the paintings' striking iconography that Huysmans so admired.[17] Yet it is also true that Moreau's idiosyncratic brand of Symbolism profoundly influenced Rouault's art. Rouault learned how to work with the medieval in Moreau's studio and library, as much as he did through his later associations with Huysmans, Bloy, and the Maritains.

What about the Middle Ages so fascinated the Symbolists? They were attracted to the mixture of the symbolic and the real or natural that—as they saw it—animated medieval art. They found this particularly in Egyptian and Byzantine art, and in the art of the French, Flemish, and Rhenish Primitives. Symbolists drew on a theory of symbol according to which an outward sign points toward an unseen, enduring truth. The source of the theory was buried deep in the Catholic culture of sacramentalism.[18] Catholic symbolists like Huysmans consciously associated their art with medieval Christianity.[19] But for most, Baudelaire was the guiding light. Many French artists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—from the Symbolists to the post-Impressionists—claimed Baudelaire as an inspiration.[20] What attracted Symbolists was Baudelaire's insight that the visible, material world ("forests of symbols") and the unseen, spiritual world (the "infinite" or "eternal") were locked in a tight embrace. They "corresponded." Baudelaire insisted on the reality of the unseen and the eternal, and on the vitality of all that was spiritual. The artist created beauty and meaning by unveiling hidden correspondences between the visible and the invisible, the finite and the infinite, the transient and the eternal. This vision of the artist's role described perfectly Moreau's artistic self-understanding. Marie-Laure de Contenson writes that "one of Moreau's most fundamental beliefs" was that "the modern artist can communicate lofty, ideal themes by incorporating forms and symbols from the art of other times and places."[21]

Moreau's eclectic bricolage showed Rouault how to work with the medieval. Few explicitly medieval figures or stories appear in his paintings. But medieval motifs and decor are ubiquitous. Fantastic mixtures of cultures and symbols in Moreau's paintings erase time and space. While Rouault's work clearly differs from Moreau's in this respect, he must have learned from his master a deeper art of braiding old with new, ancient with modern. Once Rouault moved past imitating the old masters, even his beloved Rembrandt, he came to believe that "the ancients, however great they were and however much respect we have for them, did not say everything."[22] And moreover, as he later wrote, "you don't enter Tradition as if it's a bus, with numbered seats. There must be more secret affinities."[23]

Moreau believed that art should guide the viewer toward higher, more spiritual realities: "Art can lead to religion (I refer here to no particular orthodoxy) and to true religion which lifts up the soul and guides its workings toward an ideal of beauty and perfection."[24] He was not conventionally religious. But Rouault recognized his teacher as a deeply spiritual man, with whom he shared a belief that interior experience should be the touchstone of artistic expression. Rouault quoted Moreau: "Do you believe in God? I believe only in him. I do not believe in what I touch, nor in what I see. I believe only in what I do not see and uniquely in what I feel."[25] In his last years, Moreau sometimes wrote and spoke in almost Catholic language.[26] Yet his dedication to the importance of dreams, fantasy, and mystery would seem to differ from Rouault's devout, working-class Catholicism. Similarly, the high value Moreau placed on feeling and personal experience is foreign to Catholic sensibilities: "Only my interior sentiment seems to me eternal and incontestably certain."[27]

But what Rouault shared with Moreau—and perhaps learned from him—was the sense that a work of art could at the same time express the vivid presence of an abiding truth and a private, interior experience. Fusing spiritual or enduring truth with personal experience is a key feature of modern culture. Its artistic face is associated with Symbolism, and later with Expressionism. And its religious face is a kind of modernist Catholicism. In both worlds we find Rouault.

When Moreau died in 1898, Rouault was bereft. He left the Beaux-Arts, and the next few years were his "dark night of the embodied soul," in Stephen Schloesser's words.[28] Soo Yun Kang argues that the modernist turn Rouault's art took beginning in 1903 "stemmed directly from [his] inner experience" and "prolonged inner suffering."[29] Rouault's grief and the moral crisis he endured after Moreau's death shaped his art. Yet Rouault also absorbed ideas and images from the world around him. His journeys and friendships in the first decade of the twentieth century brought him into the circle of Joris-Karl Huysmans. During the same years that Rouault enjoyed an acquaintance with Huysmans (1901-07), he also encountered primitivism. Huysmans was not Rouault's sole bridge to primitivism. But Huysmans articulated better than anyone the convergence of primitivism with medievalism. Primitivism and Huysmans left clear marks on Rouault's art.[30]

In 1901 Rouault went to the abbey of Ligugé for a retreat. There he met Huysmans, then a Benedictine oblate. Huysmans's art criticism and novels were probably not new to Rouault. From Moreau and others Rouault had likely caught the flavor of Huysmans's "supernatural naturalism" or "spiritual naturalism."[31] Huysmans loved medieval art for its juxtaposition of mysticism with naturalism or realism. This was best represented by the Primitives, northern European painters of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Moreau loved the Dutch, Flemish, and Rhenish masters, especially Brueghel, Rubens, and Dürer. He spent hours before their works in the Louvre's galleries, and conveyed his enthusiasm to his students.[32] But it was Huysmans who expressed most powerfully what the European Primitives meant to fin-de-siècle audiences. He swooned over Matthias Grünewald's Isenheim altarpiece (ca. 1508-16) when he saw it in Colmar. He made it the catalyst for the protagonist Durtal's conversion to Catholicism in his novel *Là-Bas* (1891). Over the years Huysmans kept returning to the work. Grünewald "has for many years haunted me," he confessed. He found the altarpiece "at once naturalistic and mystical, savage and civilized, free and artful." About the altarpiece's central panel, the Crucifixion, he wrote: "We penetrate with Grünewald into the domain of high mysticism and we glimpse, translated by the appearance of colors and lines, the pouring out of divinity, almost tangible, from the body." The embodied mysticism of the work impelled onlookers to prayer: "The *Laus perennis* of the Middle Ages lives again in this unending painted office Grünewald composed."[33]

By the time he published these lines, Huysmans wrote as a devout Catholic. But not all those entranced by these works were Catholics, or even believers. Their "mystical realism" also fascinated the many visitors who saw the blockbuster "Flemish Primitives" exhibition held in Bruges in 1902.[34] Installed in displays evoking late medieval settings were the jewels of Flemish art, including Jan van Eyck's *Shrine of St. Ursula* and *Mater Dolorosa,* Hieronymus Bosch's *Ecce Homo,* Rogier van der Weyden's *Mater Dolorosa*, and Gérard David's *Flaying of the Unjust Judge Sisamnes*. Artists and writers flocked to Bruges. Among them was Huysmans, but, as far as we know, not Rouault (though surely he saw a catalogue).

The 1902 Bruges show began a vogue of European Primitives exhibitions over the next decade, in Paris (1904), Brussels (1905, 1910), again in Bruges (1905, 1907), and other Dutch and Belgian cities.[35] Planners of the first Bruges show wanted to celebrate the glories of Flemish painting, long neglected by comparison to the beloved Italian Primitives of the Trecento and Quattrocento. They also hoped to encourage pride in the "ancient past" of Belgium, a state established in 1830. An even more pronounced flavor of nationalism tinged the 1904 Paris exhibition of "French Primitives," held at the Louvre and the Bibliothèque Nationale.[36] Works by Jean Fouquet, the Limbourg brothers, Robert Campin (the Master of Flémalle), François Clouet, Enguerrand Quarton, and many others were featured. Paris curators claimed as French a large number of works associated with Picardy, Burgundy, Alsace, and Provence, setting off sometimes angry debates with Belgian, German, Dutch, and Italian scholars.[37] Visitors to the show included Huysmans, the writers Charles Péguy and Anatole France, and artists André Derain, Maurice Denis,

and Henri Matisse.[38] It seems likely that Rouault would also have seen it. Compared to the 1902 Bruges show, the Paris show stimulated less discussion of religious art and medieval Christianity. And none of the exhibitions explicitly addressed the notion of "primitive" as it applied to late medieval European or Northern Renaissance art. Indeed, the Bruges catalogue avoided even defining the term. A Catholic scholarly reviewer objected in passing to labeling the work of "these eloquent masters" as primitive.[39]

Johan Huizinga, Early Ethnology, and Primitive Culture

The Bruges exhibition of "Flemish Primitives" was much discussed by writers and critics across Europe, and deeply affected a generation of art historians.[40] And while the organizers of the Primitives shows did not clarify precisely what was primitive about European art of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the exhibitions did lead some to reflect on the ancient Christian past and the primitive age of their own culture.

Among the most thoughtful commentators was Johan Huizinga (1872-1945). It has been said that the Bruges exhibition inspired him to write *The Autumn of the Middle Ages* (1924).[41] Huizinga was a Dutch professor of Sanskrit literature and philology, and his book reads as if written by a scholar of comparative cultures. Although he did not share the religious beliefs of Huysmans, Maurice Denis, and other Catholic observers, Huizinga was impressed by the same extremes—faith and credulity, sacred and secular, beauty and violence—they saw in the paintings. He wrote, "The painting of the fifteenth century is located in the sphere where the extremes of the mystical and the crudely earthy easily touch one another. The faith that speaks here is so overt that no earthly depiction is too sensuous or too extreme for it."[42] In terms redolent of Huysmans, whose books he read, Huizinga described the "symbolic, sacramental way of thinking" particular to late medieval culture.[43]

Also like Huysmans, Huizinga was a profoundly visual person, and sensitive to reverie, dreams, and fantasies. He wrote that in his youth he would wander through the countryside day-dreaming: "I allowed my mind to roam freely outside the confines of daily life into a sort of ethereal state of bliss, perhaps akin to nature worship."[44] (Here is a similar passage from a letter Rouault wrote to André Suarès: "When I was a very small child, a face or a landscape evoked in me an entire world.... I could not keep myself from dreaming of it and living in it, by memory.")[45] The resemblance to Symbolism is not accidental. Huizinga devoured symbolist literature and organized exhibitions of symbolist art in his native Groningen. He even turned to the easel himself. *The Autumn of the Middle Ages* is often read as a cultural history of the late Middle Ages. But it could just as easily be understood as a symbolist manifesto. A symbolist poet or painter would find Huizinga's discussion of late medieval literature and art deeply familiar.

Huizinga addressed indirectly the notion of European primitivism in his sprawling, complex book. He borrowed from psychology and ethnology to understand the "primitive mind" of the era. Explaining "the symbolic mode of thought," Huizinga noted that "symbolism represents an intellectual shortcut": "Thought attempts to find the connection between things, not by tracing the hidden turns of their causal ties, but rather by suddenly jumping over these causal connections. The connection is not a link between cause and effect, but one of meaning and purpose.... Or, in other words, any association on the basis of any identity may be directly transformed into an awareness of an essential and mystical connection."[46] Although he admitted this way of thinking could be described as "primitive," Huizinga insisted that it was also idealistic and guided by deep feeling. For Huizinga, religion and art were matters of emotion and the psyche. William James's *Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902) echoes in his often quoted declaration that "religious emotions always tended to transform themselves into lively images."[47]

Huizinga used the term "primitive" in the same rich (and by present day standards, ethically questionable) way that late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century archeologists, ethnologists, and artists did.[48] It could serve as a simple chronological

label, synonymous with "early," "of long ago." It could mean "savage," "uncivilized," "childlike," or even "childish."[49] Huizinga adopted his evolutionary theory of civilization from Edward B. Tylor's *Primitive Culture* (1871).[50] For Tylor, "the main tendency of culture from primaeval up to modern times has been from savagery towards civilization."[51] Evolutionary theories of civilization can be traced back to Giambattista Vico (1668-1744) and Auguste Comte (1798-1857). By the late nineteenth century, different schools of ethnology diverged in their approaches to understanding primitive culture. Those influenced by Tylor inclined toward moral and psychological explanations for observable cultural differences. They commonly offered quasi-psychological analyses of entire societies, especially primitive ones. Tylor's evolutionary scheme received robust critiques from Franz Boas and others.[52] But his influence persisted. Huizinga followed Tylor in describing primitives (whether Flemish, New Caledonian, or Native American) as behaving and thinking like children: they see souls in animals and inanimate objects, they confect improbable fables to explain natural phenomena.

Huizinga's methodological mosaic—assembled from Symbolism and late nineteenth-century ethnology and religious psychology—brought non-European cultures, the art of the Flemish masters, and medieval Christianity into the single orbit of primitivism. In fact, this was characteristic of primitivism. New interest in the arts of Africa and Oceania merged with renewed enthusiasm for ancient Egyptian, Byzantine, and medieval art. Artists and collectors visited Paris galleries to study and buy objects from France's colonies and territories in Africa.[53] And archeological discoveries in Europe created interest in prehistoric art. Ancient cave paintings in northern Spain and southwestern France had been known since the 1860s. In 1902 a French archeological congress declared the French sites authentic.[54] Drawings of the paintings appeared in books and reviews, guidebooks were published, and tourists visited the grottoes. The 1914 Baedeker guide noted that the local schoolmaster who discovered the paintings in the Périgord village of Les Eyzies-de-Tayac was "always willing to place his services at the disposal of students."[55]

The sad history of France's treatment of colonized peoples is well known. The histories of African and Caribbean resistance to imperialism, pan-Africanism in Paris, and French anti-colonialist movements deserve to be better known.[56] Ideas about the primitive must be understood in light of the political economy of French imperialism. In addition, ideas about religion—of the primitive or Catholic variety—were entangled in debates over the Catholic Church and secularism. Many thought "primitive" peoples were "savage," "ignorant," and unruly. But others were more ambivalent. They admitted that while primitives were not highly civilized, their cultures were also not materialistic, commercialized, or enthralled with progress.[57] Critiques of modern life common in avant-garde, Catholic, and some political circles spilled over into love for the art of the primitives, travel to idyllic places overseas and in rural France, and sometimes disapproval of France's colonial ventures. Admittedly, motives varied. Léon Bloy's savage attacks on modern life and Paul Gauguin's attraction to primitive art, Brittany, and Tahiti stemmed from different roots, and branched in diverging directions. But sometimes—jaggedly—modernist primitivism converged with avant-garde, modernist Catholicism.

Huysmans showed little interest in non-European primitives. But he wrote about the European Primitive paintings in terms similar to those his contemporaries applied to the Périgord cave painters ("true art masters") and African artists.[58] Primitive art was "original," not an imitation or copy. It was "naïve" and "authentic." It was ardent and pious. In the words of Durtal, Huysmans's fictional alter ego, "the art is rough and wild, but it trembles; it weeps, it even shrieks, but it prays!"[59] Huysmans located the genius of European primitive art in its religious expression and use: "it weeps ... it prays!" Some of Huysmans's ethnologist contemporaries would have agreed with him that primitive artists ("those unkempt geniuses") expressed the mystical aspirations of a people. This idea was in the air, in various forms, among those who wrote on Europe as well as those who wrote on other parts of the

world. The German psychologist Wilhelm Wundt (1832-1920) emphasized the practical functions of art among primitive peoples: in art they expressed ideas and emotions they could not otherwise articulate.[60] For art historian Émile Mâle (1862-1954) "the art of the Middle Ages is a sacred scripture of which every artist had to learn the elements." The medieval artist spoke for the faith and feelings of "innumerable generations." And medieval art "kept the hieratic grandeur of primitive art."[61] "Great art is always art with a purpose and a meaning that binds and determines its form of expression," Huizinga wrote. "It is rooted in a cult or a liturgy, and as a result is monumental or hieratic."[62]

Mâle, Huysmans, and Huizinga were the products of different personal itineraries. But they held similar ideas about the symbolic meaning and redemptive value of medieval Christian art and the European Primitives. And theirs were influential voices. In *Art and Scholasticism* (1920), Jacques Maritain paraphrased long passages from Mâle's books, amplified them, and incorporated them into his modernist project on aesthetics.[63] Rouault does not seem to have shared Maritain's enthusiasm about medieval Christian "ordering thought." But he expressed similar ideas about medieval art's collective, spiritual meaning, and praised the "artisan of old" who "loved his stone or his wood and worked with love."[64]

Rouault's almost otherworldly clowns, whores, and faces of Christ show traces of primitivism, and more than a touch of Huysmans. Jody Blake notes that we have little evidence of Rouault's direct relationship to primitivist modernism, although his *Reincarnations of Father Ubu* (1932) suggests affinities with Gauguin and the surrealists.[65] Rouault mentioned primitive art in his writings. About prehistoric grotto paintings, he wrote: "Don't ask Dominique Ingres ... to give you the religious meaning certain primitives, even those of the caves for example, give you: I think of the epic silhouettes in the cave compositions, of certain magnificent traits of the primitive herders." And he wondered, "how many of our contemporaries are less alive than a primitive of whom we know nothing of what he painted?"[66]

A look at some of Rouault's paintings and prints will show further what he shared with modernist, Catholic-inflected primitivism.

Archaic and Modern: Rouault's Devotional Images

After Moreau's death, and just after the turn of the century, Rouault and his art changed. He wrote: "Around my thirtieth year, I had a moment of madness [*coup de folie*], or grace on depending on the angle of view. 'The face of the world changed for me,' if it's not too pretentious to speak that way. Then I saw everything I saw earlier, but in another form and harmony. Would the eye sometimes lie?"[67] Despite the note of obscurity introduced in the last line, the phrase "the face of the world changed for me" is significant. As many have pointed out, after 1902 Rouault's art turned from religious narratives painted in a Rembrandtesque style, and toward circus figures, prostitutes, and the face of Christ, expressed in a modernist idiom.

There are several ways to look at this change. What has been relatively neglected is the way Rouault's post-1902 images startlingly recall the graphic arts of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. I use the word "image" deliberately, for Rouault's works—especially but not exclusively his portrayals of religious subjects—evoke devotional art from the first century of printing, which was also the era of the European Primitives.

Rouault's work evokes art from this period in form, medium, and iconography. It is often remarked that Rouault's distinctive black outlines, blocks of color, and hieratic frames call to mind older arts of printmaking, manuscript illumination, and stained glass. As well, the resemblance to early modern print media is notable. Early prints were a popular medium, and satisfied a growing demand for reproducible, faithful copies of the works of great art masters. Schongauer's and Dürer's *Passions* exemplify this. Had he lived long enough to publish the *Miserere,* Ambroise Vollard would not have produced the work in an inexpensive edition. But after Rouault acquired the legal rights to the *Miserere,* he published it in Paris, London, New York, and

Munich (1948-52). The 1951 New York edition was priced at $5.75.[68] By the late 1960s the *Miserere* had also been published in Dutch, Spanish, Italian, Scots Gaelic, and Japanese.

Some of Rouault's works look eerily like early prints that would have been well known to artists and the educated public in Paris. An example of such a print is the engraving of a skeleton waving jauntily while stepping out of its coffin (**fig. 1**), from a popular early printed book called *The Compost and Calendar of Shepherds* (1497).[69] Rouault's prints *On Your Feet, Dead Men!* and *Man is a Wolf to Man* (**nos. 27bbb** and **27kk**) recall the medieval Dance of Death, as does *La Baie des Trépassés* (**no. 58**). The Dance of Death is theatre, as Rouault reminds us with his skeletons' fancy dance moves. For Rouault, as for artists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, skeletons could also be a personal *memento mori*, a mirror held up to the living as a reminder of death, decay, and the eventual extinction of humanity and the world. Several of Rouault's illustrations for Baudelaire's *Les fleurs du mal* resemble a *memento mori* (**nos. 26e, 26h, 46b**).

Rouault was not the only artist who drew on medieval images of death in the mournful aftermath of World War I. A single—but telling and well known—example illustrates this: *J'Accuse* (1919), Abel Gance's silent film about the war.[70] The phrase "On your feet, dead men!" (see **no. 27bbb**) drawn from Bloy's *On the Threshold of the Apocalypse,* serves as a caption for a scene in which French soldiers spring from the trenches into battle. Gance also used another line similar to Rouault's *Bella matribus detestata* (**no. 27pp**) in the *Miserere:* "War kills the mothers as it does the sons." Like Rouault, Gance also drew from the medieval Dance of Death. On the eve of his departure for the front, a soldier sees a vision of skeletons (the future ghosts of his comrades) dancing through the streets of his hometown. And in a visually eloquent sequence near the close of the film, the war dead rise up from their battlefield graves to accuse the living of faithlessness.

Like Gance and other artists of his day, Rouault would have known the earlier prototypes of these

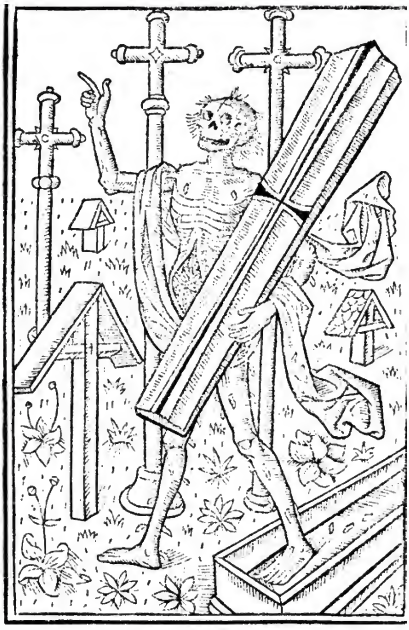


Fig. 1. *Death (Skeleton) in a Graveyard,* woodcut, *Cy est le Compost et Kalendrier des Bergiers* (Paris: Guiot Marchant, 7 January 1496/7), sig. g5. printed book. Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection, Library of Congress

images, although that does not fully explain how old images are transformed into new art. As a child Rouault accompanied his grandfather on his tours of print and booksellers along the Seine. Later, at the Beaux-Arts and the Musée Gustave Moreau, Rouault had access to rich libraries of books and periodicals. He owned at least some issues of illustrated art journals like the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts,* because his portfolios include pictures saved from them.[71] And he would have been able to browse through journals and books at libraries and bookstores. It was a wonderful time for reproductions of works of art. New technologies of photography produced increasingly faithful illustrations. Many new catalogues and studies of early prints and printed books appeared in print. In 1903 Henri Bouchot published his catalogue of early French prints, which included reproductions of rare and unique

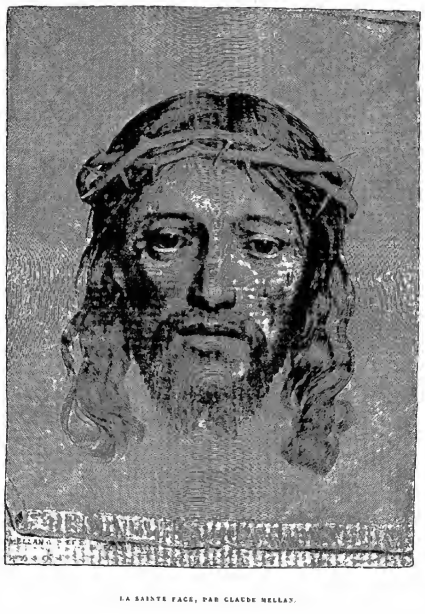


Fig. 2. Claude Mellan, *La Sainte Face*. engraving, 1649. Reproduced from the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1888

works.[72] And Émile Mâle's books were illustrated with line drawings as well as photographs of cathedral sculptures, wood carvings, tapestries, paintings, and engravings of the Pietà, the Virgin of the Seven Sorrows, Christ's Passion, the Ecce Homo, and the Dance of Death.

Rouault braided old with new, "medieval" with modern. He created his own versions of the Madonna (**nos. 27ddd, 61, 59**), Christ Mocked (**nos. 6** and **26n**), the Ecce Homo (**no. 47d**), and the Crucifixion (**nos. 27x, 27ee, 27ii, 27eee, 63, 64**). Rouault spliced images of Christ and the Virgin Mary into the life of his own world, largely erasing place and time. He did this not only pictorially, but also through his place names. In *Notre-Dame des Champs* (Our Lady of the Fields, **no. 59**), Rouault borrowed a common appellation for images of the Virgin Mary and for Catholic churches (Paris alone had multiple churches of Notre-Dame des Champs). So Notre-Dame des Champs was both an identifiable church and a more universal attribute of the Virgin Mary—she was "Our Lady of the Fields." *La Baie des Trépassés* (**no. 58**) is a real place—a rocky bay off the coast of Brittany—with a richly symbolic name ("the bay of the departed," "shipwreck bay"). But the best example is probably *Notre-Dame de la Fin des Terres* (Our Lady of World's End, or Our Lady of the Ends of the Earth, **no. 27ddd**). Rouault recalls here a real church with a richly symbolic history: Notre-Dame de la Fin des Terres de Soulac-sur-Mer, originally a sixth-century oratory on the Atlantic coast north of Bordeaux, buried by drifting sand dunes, rebuilt in the eleventh century, buried again, then finally excavated and restored in the mid-nineteenth century.[73] A Catholic church buried by the sands of time and then restored might have appealed to Rouault's grim assessment of the Church's place in modern France. Both Huysmans and Bloy felt a keen sense of nostalgia for neglected places and times of Catholic devotion.[74] The poetic, ambiguous qualities of Notre-Dame de la Fin des Terres and Notre-Dame des Champs might have appealed to Rouault's sense of the timeless allure of ancient spiritual refuges. By blurring place and time, Rouault suggested a way spiritual truth might survive the modern world, and continue to console: "In these times of vainglory and unbelief Our Lady of the Ends of the Earth remains vigilant" **(no. 27ddd)**.

The Holy Face

The face of Christ—the "holy face" that left an imprint on Veronica's veil—holds a special place among Rouault's explicitly religious pictures. He represented both Veronica and her veil in prints, paintings, and stained glass (**nos. 27gg, 27hh, 27ss, 27fff, 41, 67**). James Keenan recounts the long history of this image, from the early Middle Ages to the twentieth century.[75] It was famously portrayed by Dürer, Claude Mellan (**fig. 2**), and

others.[76] No ordinary portrait or even a representation, the veronica was a true image (*vera icon*) of Christ's face, "not made by human hands" (*acheiropoietos*). A relic as well as an image, it enjoyed a lively cult over the centuries. Nora Possenti Ghiglia notes that the cult flourished in nineteenth-century France.[77]

At the turn of the twentieth century, events surrounding the Shroud of Turin widened interest in Veronica's veil. The royal family of Savoy owned the Shroud, the piece of cloth long believed to have been wrapped around Christ's body during the three days of his burial. In 1898 the Savoyard King arranged a rare public display of the Shroud in the cathedral of Turin. Turin authorities also commissioned a series of professional photographs of the Shroud. Wide publication of the photographs renewed debate about the relic's authenticity, in print and pulpit. In France, a Catholic-Catholic pamphlet war ensued. Father Ulysse Chevalier, of Bollandist credentials, was the scholarly skeptic. He argued that there was no firm evidence of the relic's existence before the fourteenth century, and therefore it was probably a forgery or a pious fraud.[78] The journalist Arthur Loth (a protégé of Louis Veuillot) upheld the far right conservative position, defending the authenticity of the Shroud on doctrinal grounds.[79] Among the writers who weighed in was Paul Vignon (1865-1943), a Sorbonne scientist. Working with the support of the French academy of sciences, Vignon took a different approach to the Shroud question.[80] He did not support Loth's doctrinally based claims. And he thought Chevalier focused too narrowly on historical and paleological evidence. Vignon instead tried to prove the relic's authenticity by recourse to science.

It may be difficult to appreciate now the bitter controversies that the claims and authority of science aroused in France a hundred years ago. The Catholic Church's relationship to science was fraught, as we know from the early experiences recounted by the Maritains. Vignon was a Catholic scientist, ardently committed to both his faith and his profession. In his 1900 book (published in Paris, and quickly translated into English for publication in London and New York), Vignon subjected the photographs of the Shroud to meticulous study. He examined the color, measured dimensions and angles, and tried to reproduce the imprint in his laboratory. He reported that he subjected every bit of evidence—historical and physical—to rigorous scrutiny and scientific reasoning. And he concluded that there was scientific proof that the Shroud was authentic.

Vignon's book expresses his dedication to both science and "the holy face." As part of his scientific demonstration, Vignon considered whether it would have been possible for a fourteenth-century painter to create the portrait image on the Shroud by drawing or painting on linen cloth. Vignon also discussed a possibly hypothetical experiment in which chalk, "massed thickly" on a board, could then be transferred to a linen cloth. Would the resulting imprint look like the Savior's face?[81] Vignon spent countless hours with his photographs. In the end, he was convinced as much by his longing for Christ's face as by science. Moved by the portrait imprinted on the Shroud, he declared that no work of art remotely approached its truth: "It stands quite alone. Reproducing as it does, the actual lineaments of our Lord, it seems to bring Him living before us, with all the heroism, all the goodness of the Redeemer still visible on the dead face."[82]

Some of Rouault's *Christs* look astonishingly like the chalk imprint Vignon describes. The unfinished works in particular seem to resemble Vignon's experiment (**nos. 72, 80–83**). Rouault knew Vignon, and he must have known of his work on the Shroud.[83] However well he knew Vignon, though, the combination of science and religious faith represented by Vignon's book on the Shroud corresponds in its broadest terms to Rouault's Catholic modernist art.

For what is beautiful, even haunting, about Rouault's images of "the holy face" is the laboriously worked quality of the paintings, and even some of the prints. Rouault loved his materials. (Recall his note about the medieval artisan who "loved his stone or his wood and worked with love.")[84] Rouault worked and reworked his paintings. His colored and painted prints went through multiple stages of work. The heavily worked, almost carved, elaborately framed quality of Rouault's images of "the holy face" (**nos. 41, 87, 88**) is married to

the sense of a sacred image "not made by human hands." Rouault knew the legend of the imprint of Christ's face on Veronica's veil. And he understood the reverence with which some of the Catholic faithful—among them his friend and mentor Léon Bloy—beheld "the holy face."[85] He referred to the spiritual meaning of "the holy face" in a print from the *Miserere*, in which a tiny picture of Veronica's veil hangs on the wall of dying person's bedchamber (**no. 27ss**).

Rouault's archaic faces of Christ are manifestly an artisan's work, and yet also gesture toward what is not made by human hands. Here is the fullest pictorial expression of his primitivist, Catholic-inflected modernism.

Endnotes

1 Rouault, *Sur l'art et sur la vie*, ed. Bernard Dorival (Paris: Denoël/Gonthier, 1971) 95.

2 Jacques Maritain, introduction to Léon Bloy, *Pilgrim of the Absolute*, trans. John Coleman and Harry Lorin Binsse (New York: Pantheon Books, 1947) 8.

3 On the Maritains see Stephen Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism: Mystic Modernism in Postwar Paris, 1919-1933* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press 2005) 141-209.

4 On "sites of memory" (*lieux de mémoire*) see Pierre Nora, ed., *Les lieux de mémoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984-92).

5 Raïssa Maritain commented amusingly on this: *We Have Been Friends Together, and Adventures in Grace: The Memoirs of Raïssa Maritain*, trans. Julie Kernan (Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1961) 196-97. Her picturesque description is echoed more soberly by Claude Roulet in the *avant-propos* to Rouault's *Soliloques* (Neuchâtel: Ides et Calendes, 1944) 20-26. Roulet notes that Rouault's writing was quite literally elliptical: he left out words most would think important for correct and clear writing (26-27).

6 Rouault, *Sur l'art et sur la vie* 81-82, 110. Henri Evenepoel, one of Rouault's fellow students, described the elderly Moreau's visit to Henri Matisse's studio to see Matisse's paintings: "He [Moreau] has remained astonishingly youthful, he's not a professor, he hasn't the slightest trace of pedantry, he's a friend." (Qtd. by Hilary Spurling, *The Unknown Matisse: A Life of Henri Matisse: The Early Years, 1869-1908* [New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005] 110.)

7 Rouault, *Sur l'art et sur la vie* 79.

8 Spurling 72; Rouault, *Sur l'art et sur la vie* 24-25, 177.

9 See Rouault, *Sur l'art et sur la vie* 21-22, 76-82; and Spurling 72-75, 83-90.

10 Rouault, *Sur l'art et sur la vie* 78; Spurling 83-86. See also Geneviève Lacambre, ed., *Gustave Moreau: Between Epic and Dream* (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago / Princeton Univ. Press, 1999).

11 Lacambre, "Gustave Moreau and Exoticism," *Gustave Moreau*, ed. Lacambre, 15. *Magasin pittoresque* was published from 1833 to 1912. *L'art pour tous: Encyclopédie de l'art industriel et décoratif* was published from 1861 to 1906.

12 Nicolas Xavier Willemin, with André Ariodant Pottier, *Monuments français inédits pour servir à l'histoire des arts depuis le VIe siècle jusqu'au commencement du XVIIe: Choix de costumes, civils et militaires, d'armes, armures, instruments de musique, meubles de toute espèce, et de décorations intérieures et extérieures des maisons* (Paris: Chez Mademoiselle

Willemin, 1839). See Marie-Laure de Contenson, "The Middle Ages as Reinvented by Gustave Moreau," *Gustave Moreau*, ed. Lacambre, 22-23.

13 Karl Baedeker, *Paris and Environs, With Routes from London to Paris: Handbook for Travellers* (Leipzig: Karl Baedeker, 1904) 94.

14 Lacambre 16; Contenson 25.

15 A few exemplary and influential works are Xavier Barbier de Montault, *Traité d'iconographie chrétienne* (Paris: L. Vivès, 1890); *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, eds. Henri Leclercq, Fernand Cabrol, and Henri-Irénée Marrou (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1907-50); and Émile Mâle, *L'art religieux de la fin du moyen âge en France: Étude sur l'iconographie du moyen âge et sur ses sources d'inspiration*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1922), the first edition of which was published in 1908. See also Joseph F. Byrnes, *Catholic and French Forever: Religious and National Identity in Modern France* (University Park: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 2005) 195-97.

16 See Jeffery Howe's essay in this catalogue.

17 Fabrice Hergott, "Rouault reconsidéré," *Georges Rouault: "Forme, couleur, harmonie,"* eds. Hergott et al. (Strasbourg: Éditions des Musées de Strasbourg, 2006) 16.

18 On the relationship between Catholic sacramentalism and modernist culture see Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism*.

19 See Huysmans on medieval symbolism: *Trois églises et trois primitifs*, 6th ed. (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1908) 5-9.

20 See Spurling 117-19; Richard Brettell and Joachim Pissarro, *The Impressionist and the City: Pissarro's Series Paintings*, ed. Mary Anne Stevens (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1992) xliv-xlix.

21 Contenson 22.

22 Rouault, *Sur l'art et sur la vie* 186.

23 Rouault, *Sur l'art et sur la vie* 128.

24 See Schloesser's essay in this catalogue.

25 Rouault, *Sur l'art et sur la vie* 77-78. This passage is from Moreau's *écrits intimes*, to which Rouault would have had access at least from the time he became curator of the Musée Gustave Moreau (1902). See Moreau, *L'assembler de rêves: Écrits complets de Gustave Moreau*, ed. Pierre-Louis Mathieu (Fontfroide: Bibliothèque Artistique et Littéraire) 275.

26 See Soo Yun Kang, *Rouault in Perspective: Contextual and Theoretical Study of His Art* (Lanham, MD: International Scholars Publications, 2000) 25-27.

27 Rouault, *Sur l'art et sur la vie* 78.

28 Schloesser's essay in this catalogue.

29 Kang 40.

30 Rouault briefly mentioned the European Primitives: *Sur l'art et sur la vie* 50-51, 83, 123.

31 On Huysmans see Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 39-45; and Ellis Hanson, *Decadence and Catholicism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1997) 108-68.

32 Rouault, *Sur l'art et sur la vie* 79-80; Spurling 84-87.

33 Huysmans, *Trois églises et trois primitifs* 152, 206, 174, 212.

34 Francis Haskell, *History and Its Images: Art and the Interpretation of the Past* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2000) 445-76.

35 Edward Peters and Walter Simons, "The New Huizinga and the Old Middle Ages," *Speculum* 74.3 (1999) 597-601.

36 See Dominique Thiébaut, ed., *Primitifs français, découvertes et redécouvertes*, (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 2004) 56-81.

37 On the debates see Lisa Deam, "Flemish versus Netherlandish: A Discourse of Nationalism," *Renaissance Quarterly* 51.1 (1998): 1-33.

38 Thiébaut 68-70.

39 The best known guide to the Bruges show, written by the chief curator, did not define either "Flemish" or "primitive": W. H. James Weale, *Exhibition des primitifs flamands et d'art ancien, Bruges* (Bruges: Desclée et De Brouwer, 1902). The Catholic review is Jules Helbig, "Les anciens maîtres flamands à l'Exposition de Bruges," *Revue de l'art chrétien* 45.13 (September 1902): 365-73.

40 Andrée Hayum, *The Isenheim Altarpiece: God's Medicine and the Painter's Vision* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1989) 118-49; and Haskell 445-95.

41 Huizinga, *The Autumn of the Middle Ages*, trans. R. J. Payton and U. Mammitzsch (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1996). On Huizinga see Peters and Simons 596-604.

42 Huizinga, *Autumn of the Middle Ages* 317.

43 Huizinga, "The Problem of the Renaissance," *Men and Ideas: History, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance*, trans. James S. Holmes, ed. Hans van Marle (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1960) 282.

44 Huizinga, "My Path to History," *Dutch Civilisation in the Seventeenth Century and Other Essays*, trans. A. J. Pomerans, ed. P. Geyl and F. W. N. Hugenholtz (New York: F. Ungar and Co., 1968) 253.

45 Rouault, *Sur l'art et sur la vie* 175.

46 Huizinga, *Autumn of the Middle Ages* 236.

47 Huizinga, *Autumn of the Middle Ages* 234; and William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature: Being the Gifford Lectures on Natural Religion Delivered at Edinburgh in 1901-1902* (London: Longmans, Green, 1902).

48 See Philippe Dagen, *Le peintre, le poète, le sauvage: Les voies du primitivisme dans l'art français* (Paris: Flammarion, 1998).

49 See Huizinga, *Autumn of the Middle Ages* 236, 318-19.

50 Peters and Simons 610-11. I connect Huizinga's *Autumn of the Middle Ages* more strongly to Tylor than Peters and Simons do. See also Edward B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art, and Custom,* 6th ed. (London: John Murray, 1920). On Tylor see E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Theories of Primitive Religion* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1965) 23-30.

51 Tylor 21.

52 Franz Boas, *Race, Language, and Culture* (New York: Free Press, 1940) 281-304, 596-607; and Boas, *Primitive Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1928) 1-8.

53 See Dagen.

54 Dagen 22.

55 Karl Baedeker, *Southern France, Including Corsica: Handbook for Travellers*, 6th rev. ed. (Leipzig: Karl Baedeker, 1914) 86.

56 See Jody Blake's essay in this catalogue.

57 Dagen explicates these discourses admirably well.

58 Dagen 25-26.

59 Huysmans, *La cathédrale* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1955) 269: "l'art est abrupt et farouche, mais il vibre; il pleure, it hurle même, mais il prie!" The book was first published in 1908.

60 Wundt wrote about primitive art in his *Völkerpsychologie* (1904). His views subsequently made their way into the fields of psychology and anthropology. See Franz Boas' strong criticism of Wundt in Boas, *Primitive Art* 14-15.

61 Mâle, *L'art religieux du XIIIe siècle en France*, 5th ed. (Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1923) 2, 4, 1. The first edition was published in 1898. On Mâle see also Byrnes 179-208. On "hieratic grandeur" see Gael Mooney and Stephen Schloesser's essay in this catalogue.

62 Huizinga, "Renaissance and Realism," *Men and Ideas* 304.

63 See J. Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism*, trans. Joseph W. Evans, 3rd (final) ed. (1935) chapter 8 and appendix 1. Available online at the Jacques Maritain Center, Univ. of Notre Dame. http://www2.nd.edu/Departments/Maritain/etext/art.htm. Accessed 2 June 2008.

64 Rouault, *Sur l'art et sur la vie* 127. A century ago, art historians were preoccupied with the lives and work practices of medieval artists and artisans. See for example Henri Bouchot, "La condition sociale des peintres français du XIIIe au XVe siècle," *Revue des deux mondes* 43 (1908) 153-77. Bouchot was one of the organizers of the 1904 "French Primitives" exhibition.

65 See Blake's essay in this catalogue.

66 Rouault, *Sur l'art et sur la vie* 137, 129.

67 Rouault, *Sur l'art et sur la vie* 187: "... vers la trentième annee, j'ai eu un coup de folie, soit une grâce suivant l'angle où on se place. 'La face du monde a changé pour moi,' si ce n'est pas trop prétentieux de parler ainsi; j'ai vu alors tout ce que je voyais auparavant mais dans une autre forme et harmonie. L'oeil serait-il parfois menteur?" (My English translation.)

68 *Time*, 10 December 1951. http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,815724,00.html. Accessed 2 June 2008.

69 *Cy est le compost et kalendrier des bergiers* (Paris: Guiot Marchant, 7 January 1496/97) fol. g5. Copy in the Rosenwald Collection, the Library of Congress.

70 On the film see Laurent Véray, "Abel Gance, cinéaste à l'oeuvre cicatricielle," *1895: Revue de l'Association Française de Recherche sur l'Histoire du Cinéma* 31 (2000) 19-52.

71 I am grateful to Diana Larsen for this information.

72 Bouchot, *Les deux cents incunables xylographiques du Département des Estampes* (Paris: Librairie Centrale des Beaux-Arts, 1903).

73 See Schloesser's essay in this catalogue; and Baedeker, *Southern France* 57.

74 For Huysmans see *La cathédrale*. Bloy's diaries express his aggrieved nostalgia for the ruins of the Catholic Church. See for example *Quatre ans de captivité à Cochons-sur-Marne* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1926) 15-16, 47-48, 130-31.

75 See Keenan in this catalogue, and Jeffrey Hamburger, *The Visual and the Visionary: Art and Female Spirituality in Late Medieval* Germany (New York: Zone Books, 1998) 317-82.

76 On "the holy face" and art see Giovanni Morello and Gerhard Wolf, eds., *Il volto di Cristo* (Milan: Electa, 2000).

77 See Nora Possenti Ghiglia's essay in this catalogue, and her *Il volto di Cristo in Rouault* (Milan: Ancora, 2002) 18-21.

78 Ulysse Chevalier, *Le St Suaire de Lirey-Chambéry-Turin et les Défenseurs de son Authenticité* (Paris: Alphonse Picard et Fils, 1902).

79 Arthur Loth, *Le portrait de N.-S. Jésus-Christ d'après le Saint-Suaire de Turin, avec réproductions photographiques* (Paris: H. Oudin, 1900).

80 Paul Vignon, *The Shroud of Christ* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1902). From the title page: "Translated from the French. With Nine Photogravure and

Collotype Plates and Thirty-Eight Illustrations in the Text." Chevalier identified Vignon as "préparateur en zoologie à la Sorbonne" (Chevalier 13).

81 Vignon 115-17.

82 Vignon 107.

83 See Possenti Ghiglia in this catalogue. Rouault may have known Vignon through the Maritains. In 1914 Vignon joined the faculty of the Institut Catholique, where Jacques Maritain taught philosophy. In his final years Vignon wrote a Thomist-influenced book about evolutionary biology (published posthumously): *Au souffle de l'esprit créateur* (Paris: Beauchesne et ses fils, 1946), with a preface by Paul Claudel.

84 Rouault, *Sur l'art et sur la vie* 127.

85 Bloy writes about going on pilgrimage to a shrine with a replica of Veronica's veil in his diaries for 1900: *Quatre ans de captivité à Cochons-sur-Marne* 15-16, 47-48. His daughter was named Véronique.

PART II: 1902–1920

1902–1920: The Hard Metier of Unmasking

Stephen Schloesser

> "Character-traits," said Sandor Ferenczi, one of the most brilliant minds of Freud's intimate circle of early psychoanalysts, "are secret psychoses."...Ferenczi had already seen behind the tight-lipped masks, the smiling masks, the earnest masks, the satisfied masks that people use to bluff the world and themselves about their secret psychoses.[1]

I. 1902–1904: Toward a Mystic Realism

Four months after Rouault returned to Paris from the abbey of Ligugé, Moreau's ghost delivered some badly needed corporeal aid. It had taken the French state bureaucracy nearly four years to process Moreau's will in which he had donated his home to be preserved as a national museum, with the stipulation that his works were to be kept together intact. An official decree in February 1902 finally accepted these terms which had specified that Rouault was to be named the museum's first conservator. As a result, as spring appeared on the horizon, Rouault's personal winter was about to retreat. The new position meant he would have a fixed lodging as well as an annual indemnity which, while modest, provided at least a modicum of reliable income.

Still in precarious health, Rouault left Paris for yet another cure, this one at the thermal springs of Évian in the Alps. (Here too he was following Moreau's ghost: Moreau had written Rouault from one of his own stays at Évian ten years earlier.[2]) While recovering his physical health he also rediscovered nature and decisively abandoned his "Rembrandtesque" style. After returning to Paris, Rouault rented a studio with Albert Marquet near the Moulin Rouge. (Transportation was made easier by the opening of the Place de Clichy Métro station that same year.) As the atelier was in the middle of a red light district, numerous prostitutes walked the streets. In exchange for their posing as models, Rouault offered them his studio's wood-stove heated refuge from the cold and began to sketch his first *filles* (whores) for which he would become notorious.[3] With modest financial means at his disposal, Rouault left aside expensive oil for less costly mixtures of other lighter materials (e.g., gouache, watercolors, India inks, pastels). This practical economic necessity impacted his technique, which evolved in completely unforeseeable ways.

Nearly a year later, on January 14, 1903, the Musée Gustave Moreau was officially inaugurated. One can only speculate about what had happened to Rouault's consciousness and image of Moreau that year—from February 1902 through January 1903—during which he had complete access to his master's home.

Moreau had not allowed his students to visit his studio while he was alive: a firm believer in supporting his students' individual visions, he did not want to overly influence them. They had only seen, then, his highly stylized and finely detailed finished works. What shock must Rouault have undergone as he oversaw the task of putting Moreau's works and papers into order? Seeing Moreau's wildly experimental and abstract sketches and unfinished works cannot but have had a profoundly liberating—and unnerving—effect on him.[4] Perhaps it was this jolting experience that helped catalyze Rouault and René Piot, aided by Marquet, Henri Matisse, and André Derain, to found the first Salon d'automne as a rival (and affront) to the Academic and official Paris Salon, first open from October 31 to December 6, 1903.

In addition to his *filles*, (first painted in 1903; first exhibited in 1904), Rouault also became known for his circus figures, which began appearing at this time. Like a number of artists in both Europe and the United States, Rouault drew on the nineteenth-century romantic clown and even further back to the *commedia dell'arte* for his types.[5] However, Rouault also had a source of inspiration more immediate and visceral: the traveling circus that had frequented Belleville in his childhood.

> Dream or reality, the wan child from the poor neighborhood will still find his way to the circus midway. One way or another, he will find there new and better ways to forget the long winters, the gloomy days, the hard and hostile faces, the depressed spirits and the callused hearts.[6]

Rouault's vision of the circus was also part of a larger philosophical vision, one particular aspect of a more general compassion for those who wander homeless, a first-hand experience that was all too vivid given his recent nervous collapse.

In addition to the shock of discovering Moreau's own "wild" productions, Rouault would experience a second powerful jolt while going through Moreau's personal library in 1904: the discovery of the polemical writer Léon Bloy. Rouault read Bloy's two novels in their order of publication: first, *Le Désespéré* (The Desperate One, 1887) and then *La Femme pauvre* (The Poor Woman, 1897). Rouault told Auguste Marguillier, secretary of the art review *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, that he would like to meet Bloy. Marguillier hosted a dinner on April 21, 1904, at which Rouault met the writer. Their evolving relationship would lead to yet another important encounter when Rouault (age thirty-four) made the acquaintance of Jacques and Raïssa Maritain (aged twenty-three and twenty-two respectively) at Bloy's Montmartre home in 1905.

What about Bloy in particular would have attracted such energy and passion on Rouault's part? At least one part of the answer must be Rouault's sense that Bloy represented a rare ideal: a Catholic artist engaged in social action. In a 1904 letter that Rouault asked Marguillier to give to Abbé (Arthur) Mugnier,[7] he wrote:

> I love my art passionately, and there is a growing conflict between my art and my religion… It is at the very moment when I have the greatest need of religion to sustain me in life and in art, that the advice and counsel of very religious and very respectable Catholics have filled me with some confusion… You can well understand what it is to be an artist… so dedicated to his work that it fills him with sadness to see that the conflict might end deplorably in letting go of religion…
>
> I believe in God and I also believe that he will help me to come through… I am succumbing under the weight of my sufferings and, perhaps, too, in all humility, under the weight of the suffering of others… The Catholics have killed me… at a moment when I was seeking profound consolation. They have a horror of any action, as well as the certainty (and the mad pride inspired by that certainty) that they are in possession of the truth… They will be living more and more in a narrow circle, which will go on shrinking. If a man like Bloy were at the center of it, holding *La Femme pauvre* in

> one hand, and *Le Désespéré* in the other, it would be different....[8]

Working with the fairly brief time-line—Rouault's First Communion (1895); Moreau's death (1898); Ligugé (1901); first paintings of prostitutes (1903); the letter intended for l'abbé Mugnier (1904)—it would seem that Rouault is referring to harsh criticism received for his post-1902 works, i.e., works produced as part of Rouault's recovery from his nervous collapse following Moreau's death. In other words, it seemed as though "the Catholics" assaulted him at precisely the time he needed consolation.

Bloy's position as a Catholic artist *engagé* synthesized two worlds that seemed incompatible—two worlds which Rouault had been struggling to reconcile within himself since Moreau's death.[9] On the one hand, Bloy was genuinely impoverished and his nickname ("the ungrateful beggar") came from his constant pestering of acquaintances as well as strangers for money. Bloy identified deeply with society's most marginalized members during the "beautiful era" of the Belle Époque (France's parallel to America's "Gilded Age" of robber barons), a time of enormous discrepancies in wealth between the newly rich and the vast urban masses of the industrial working class. Roger Shattuck's classic work, *The Banquet Years*, describes the era as

> a time marked by conspicuous consumption: "a life of pompous display, frivolity, hypocrisy, cultivated taste, and relaxed morals" during which "the untaxed rich lived in shameless luxury and systematically brutalized le peuple with venal journalism, inspiring promises of progress and expanding empire, and cheap absinthe."[10]

Bloy's attacks on bourgeois capitalism and scientific rationalism were scathingly vicious and wickedly funny, indebted to a French tradition of wit and invective evoking both Voltaire and Daumier.

On the other hand, Bloy was a fervent but unpredictable Catholic who saw all the world through a symbolist's eyes: the particular dramas we see played out on history's small stages point beyond themselves to a cosmic drama ultimately fulfilled only at the apocalypse. An instructive example of his symbolist method may be found in his essay entitled "*Je m'accuse*" [I accuse myself], a play on the words of Zola's manifesto that reignited the Dreyfus Affair, "*J'accuse!*"[11] On history's visible stage, Colonel Dreyfus had been unjustly convicted, said Bloy, for "the presumption of a known crime, for which he appears to be absolutely innocent and not responsible." However, Bloy saw Dreyfus (who, like his invisible counterpart, Christ, was Jewish) in reality being "punished for an *unknown* crime"—that is, human sin. Thus, the Dreyfus Affair, in Bloy's idiosyncratic symbolist reading, was only "an illusion"—a mystic masque—"*the human and hideous appearance of a DIVINE COURT CASE for which the moment has not yet come to be revealed in the light.*" Since Bloy (like his friend, Huysmans) believed in the doctrine of vicarious redemption, he saw Dreyfus as suffering on behalf of Bloy's own sins. Hence: "*Je m'accuse.*"[12]

In sum, Bloy synthesized within his writings and his own life two worlds that Rouault had been completely immersed in: the thoroughly concrete realist working-class milieu of his childhood from 1871 to 1891; and the esoteric and ethereal symbolist Catholic atmosphere he breathed in from 1892 to 1901. Not surprisingly, the artist who had been trying to put his world back together since 1902 felt that he had discovered in Bloy a possible middle way between the horns of his dilemma.

II. 1905: Revelation of the Mystic Masque

The year 1905 stands as the doorway to what one scholar has called "The Invisible Century," a radical departure from the nineteenth century that had been dominated by positivism's privileging of "the visible."[13] It was the *annus mirabilis* for Albert Einstein who published three major papers, including his general theory of relativity. 1905 was also a crucial year for psychoanalysis, the science of self-knowledge: Sigmund Freud published *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious*, and *Fragments of an Analysis*

of a Case of Hysteria ('Dora').[14] Given Rouault's tremendous outburst of emotional and artistic energy following 1902, it is not surprising that 1905 would also mark a definitive year in his evolving vision. He would experience a profound personal revelation that provides the interpretive key to his creativity for decades to come. As William Dyrness has written, "It would be improper to place too much weight on this event, were it not for the fact that Rouault himself stressed the importance of it. Reflecting on it, he once mused: 'To draw all of one's art from one experience of seeing an aging beat-up clown is complete arrogance, or perfect humility if that is the way you are made.'"[15]

Rouault related this revelation in a letter to Édouard Schuré, a prolific writer central to the symbolist movement. Fascinated with the esoteric, Schuré remains most well-known for his perennially popular *The Great Initiates. Sketch of the Secret History of Religions: Rama Krishna; Hermes; Moses; Orpheus; Pythagorus; Plato; Jesus* (1889).[16] Rouault's letter followed closely on the publication of Schuré's *Precursors and Rebels: Shelley, Nietzsche…Gustave Moreau* (1904). Certainly, Rouault's decision to disclose this particular epiphany about the disjunction between semblance and reality to such a high-profile figure in the symbolist world was not coincidental.

Rouault's narration of his revelatory experience follows the general outline of the prose-poem "The Old Acrobat" by Baudelaire (whose work, as noted above, he had discovered along with Shakespeare as a student in Moreau's personal library). In this poem, Baudelaire unveils a harsh reality about circus life: the rootlessness of the wandering entertainers who bring exotic novelties to the lives of others tragically leads to a sorrowful life without rootedness in old age. Baudelaire records seeing "a pitiful acrobat, stooped, obsolete, decrepit, a human ruin, backed against one of the posts of his shack," and he lays out the contrast between the bright happiness of the audience sure of its stable future and the dark misery of the clown who has no idea what tomorrow will bring:

> Everywhere joy, profit, debauchery;
> everywhere the certainty of tomorrow's bread; everywhere the frenzied explosion of vitality. Here absolute wretchedness, wretchedness rigged out, most horrible, rigged out in comic rags, where necessity, much more than art, had introduced the contrast. [The old acrobat] was not laughing, the wretched man! He was not crying, he was not dancing, he was not gesturing, he was not shouting; he was singing no song, neither jolly nor woeful, he was not beseeching. He was mute and motionless.…

Then, Baudelaire the poet, overcome with emotion, draws the conclusion:

> And, turning around, obsessed by that vision, I tried to analyze my sudden sorrow, and I told myself: I have just seen the image of…the old poet without friends, without family, without children, debased by his wretchedness and the public's ingratitude, and whose booth the forgetful world no longer wants to enter![17]

This experience is an example of Baudelairean *dédoublement*: an unexpected situation in which one sees one's "double" and is forced to reevaluate one's conception of oneself.[18]

Rouault's account of his own 1905 revelation also reads as a *dédoublement*.[19] He writes to Schuré that he came across a "nomad caravan, parked by the roadside." There he saw an "old clown sitting in a corner of his caravan in the process of mending his sparkling and gaudy costume." Rouault notes the same contrast that Baudelaire had: namely, between the "brilliant scintillating objects, made to amuse" and "a life of infinite sadness, if seen from slightly above." Then Rouault draws out a symbolist's conclusion:

> I saw quite clearly that the "Clown" was me, was us, nearly all of us…This rich and glittering costume, it is given to us by life itself, we are all more or less clowns, we all wear a glittering costume…[emphases are Rouault's].

The passage would be significant enough as it stands, giving the viewer of Rouault's work an interpretative key. But in the lines that follow, Rouault uses this insight to explain its double—i.e., the other "realist" side of his character, the savage wit that compelled the artist (not unlike Bloy) to unmask those he felt were seriously self-deceived:

> I have the defect (defect perhaps…in any case it causes me abysmal suffering) of leaving no one his glittering costume, be he king or emperor. I want to see the soul of the man in front of me…and the greater he is, the more mankind glorifies him, the more I fear for his soul…[20]

The question of self-knowledge and self-deception became all important for Rouault. He would later write: "*To know yourself*, not by discussion, analysis, and verbiage, but to know yourself by suffering and in suffering. To know yourself by living and in living, far from snobbism and the contrived, but in the truth and in *the effort* of all our being." Perhaps Rouault had in mind Pascal's imperative: "You must know yourself (*Il faut se connaître soi-même*). If this does not serve to find the truth, at least it serves to order your life."[21]

Rouault's double-pronged revelation provides a means for considering two groups of characters he produced at this time: first, those who perceive themselves through the same flattering lens with which the world holds them in high esteem; second, those tragicomic figures who perceive the disjunction between the semblance of costumes and the reality of the heart.

The distinction between self-deceived antagonists and protagonists received its most explicit representation at the 1905 Salon d'automne. (This third Salon has become legendary for Louis Vauxcelles's review in the daily newspaper *Gil Blas* which christened the painters exhibited in Salle VII as *les fauves*—wild beasts. The name stuck.[22]) Rouault exhibited a triptych entitled *Filles/Poulot* (Whores/Poulot)in which one of the panels depicted Monsieur and Madame Poulot, the main bourgeois characters in Bloy's *La Femme pauvre*.[23] While Rouault intended the work as a tribute to Bloy and to the importance the novel had for him (and for the Maritains), it carried a far greater significance.

On the one hand, *Filles/Poulot* demonstrated the realist genre: it not only depicted prostitutes, but also unfavorably represented the bourgeois antagonists who displayed disregard and even contempt for "the poor woman" Clotilde. On the other hand, the work demonstrated an extension of the symbolist genre, pictorially representing a literary text. Admittedly, the text of *La Femme pauvre* was not the kind of *texte littéraire* that symbolists normally deployed in their representations of the non-representable—mythological, classical, scriptural, and other exotic anti-realist texts. However, it was a literary text—indeed, a Catholic-symbolist text. Just as Bloy saw Colonel Dreyfus, "absolutely innocent and not responsible," suffering "for an *unknown* crime"—"*the human and hideous appearance of a DIVINE COURT COURT CASE*"—so too the suffering of Bloy's Clotilde is meant to be seen as a symbol of a more cosmic suffering—i.e., the agony of Christ. As such, the *Filles/Poulot* triptych signified a remarkable accomplishment for Rouault: a dialectical resolution of the realist-symbolist dilemma.[24]

Regardless of Rouault's intentions, Bloy's reaction was typically irrational, irascible, and ungrateful. After a second visit to see the work at the Salon d'Automne, Bloy made an entry in his diary for October 31, 1905: "The artist that I thought was capable of painting seraphim seems only able to imagine the most atrocious and avenging caricatures.… He wanted to make my *Poulot*.…He has [instead] made two assassins from the poor district."[25] Like all of Bloy's diaries, this one was published, and so his rejection of Rouault's depiction of his literary figures reached a wide reading public.[26] However, Bloy's reaction is of little importance when compared with Rouault's accomplishment. Huysmans's Decadent hagiography *Sainte-Lydwine* (1901) and Rouault's *Filles/Poulots* (1905) both seem to be in search of an adequate symbolist-realist "mystic realism." Huysmans's gothic account of the medieval saint's grotesque bodily eruptions was one of the last productions of the nineteenth century, the "visible century." Rouault's depiction of "the poor woman" and the antagonistic bourgeoisie as an

everyday manifestation of an unseen cosmic contest stood firmly in the new "invisible century."

III. 1902–1919: Unmasking the Self-Deceived

After the serious breakdown of 1898-1902 and the cure at Évian, Rouault recovered not only his physical health and a love of nature but also some of his childhood esprit formed by Daumier and Voltaire. He began producing caricatures both satirical and tragicomic that demonstrate an often wicked sense of humor. Guillaume Apollinaire (who would later coin the word "surrealist") explicitly located Rouault's works in the lineage of Daumier: "Last year, in the course of an exhibition at the Druet Gallery, not enough was made of the 'Albums' of Rouault, in which terrifying drawings, full of pity and irony, alternated with acerbic and bitter footnotes, with curious poems.... To my mind, few painters since Daumier have reached so far into sublime comedy, which, here, mingles with sublime tragedy."[27]

Unlike Rouault's nude prostitutes, the 1906 *Fille Accoudée (dit aussi, Minauderie ou, L'Entremetteuse*) (**no. 11**), making a madame's living by mediating between prostitutes and clients, is fully clothed and displays none of the vulnerability and exposure undergone by those who work for her. David Nash puts it well in his 2007 exhibition catalogue: "The...all-seeing 'Entremetteuse' (or, go-between) who, with her custom hat, jewelry, red dress and self-satisfied grin contrasts sharply with the exposed girls in her charge. For them, the artist would insist, redemption was close at hand. For the boorish 'Entremetteuse,' however, salvation seems much farther away."[28]

La Belle Hélène (1910-19, **no. 12**) presumably refers to Helen of Troy and stands in the line of Daumier's "Ancient History" caricatures of classical mythology (discussed above, *Ménélas Vainqueur* and *Narcisse*; in Schloesser, "1871-1901").[29] Renowned as the most beautiful woman in history, Helen's was the face that launched a thousand ships, eventually concluding in a catastrophic bloodbath and the destruction of that great ancient city.[30] This dialectical tension between beauty and evil—ideal and spleen—is the alluring yet horrifying admixture constituting Baudelaire's "red ideal," represented by both Shakespeare (Lady Macbeth) and Euripides.[31] Clytemnestra's judgment of the beautiful Helen goes for the jugular:

> And now I am to lose a child—to a cruel death. If someone were to ask you why, tell me, what would say? Shall I speak for you? I know why. So that Menelaus may get his wife back. Helen. A daughter for a whore!... Is it fair and just to offer up your own child, a single victim for all the Greeks? Why shouldn't Menelaus sacrifice his own daughter, Hermione, for her mother's sake? It is his quarrel. But it is I, I who have been loyal to your bed, I must lose my child. And she, the whore Helen, will keep her daughter.[32]

Rouault's lighthearted satire echoes not only Daumier but also Jacques Offenbach's mid-nineteenth-century *opérette-bouffe* (based on the classic tale), *La Belle Hélène* (1864). Tracing this lineage further, *Hortense* (*Pucelles et non pucelles*) (1902-14) might very well refer to Hortense Schneider (1833-1920), the French soprano for whom Offenbach wrote the title role of *La Belle Hélène*. Rouault's footnote inscription ("virginal and not virginal") might then allude to Schneider's nickname, "*Passage des Princes*" (Passageway of Princes).[33] The term denotes the alley to the stage door, but it was assigned to Schneider by her main rival, alluding to her reputation for offering her sexual favors freely to wealthy patrons including the Prince of Wales, the future Edward VII.[34] "If the *Belle Hélène* reduced the Greek epoch to human proportions," writes one scholar, "its rehearsals elevated human passions and nastiness to epic proportions. Hortense, who knew that the director, authors and composer did not want the piece created by anyone but herself, gave free rein to her nervous, violent and difficult character, never more than a tiny distance away from outright mania."[35]

The title *L'Avantageux/Surhomme* (1912-13, **no. 14**) also seems to involve several levels of wordplay. The French word *l'avantageux* tends

to be found in financial contexts: as a noun it can mean "bargain"; as an adjective it can denote an offer that is "attractive." Rouault's alternative title, "Superman," most obviously suggests a satirical allusion to Nietzsche's *Übermensch* (Overman or Superman). Additionally, given Rouault's fondness for the bawdy (seen in his portrayals of Helen and Hortense), it might also refer to Alfred Jarry's *Supermale*. Published in 1902 but futuristically set in 1920, the *Supermale* "is obsessed with the potentialities of man and what he considers to be his limitations; with the idea of extending frontiers, pushing the possible to the limits of the imaginable, discovering what might be done by will power to liberate and control the energy of the universe."[36] When the Supermale achieves his upper limit of copulating eighty-two times in twenty-four hours, a senator exclaims, "Depopulation is now but an empty word" while a military general sings out, "Hardly even a word."[37] Close to the end of the book is a dream celebrating Helen of Troy that ends with her own musings:

> Menelaus, Paris, they are both dead,
> Husband and lover—and the dead bestrew
> the plain
> To make a softer carpet to my tread,
> A carpet of love, quivering beneath the
> prize;
> And then, I often dress myself in green,
>
> And...I don't know...these days I have grown
> fond of red.[38]

Whether *Übermensch*, *The Supermale*, *The Attractive [Man]*, or simply a *Good Bargain*, one thing is certain: *L'Avantageux* is a modern-day Narcissus—like Daumier's, in love with his own appearance.

Le Pédagogue/Kultur (1912-13, **no. 15**) offers yet another example of Rouault's multivalent humor (and perhaps long-held resentments). This depiction of the pedagogue (or more simply, teacher) has as its alternate title the German word *Kultur*—clearly meant to denote not culture in general but specifically German culture.[39] Like the allusion of *Surhomme* to Nietzsche, the word *Kultur* shows Rouault's share of the anti-German sentiment building up just before the Great War. (Almost immediately after the war's outbreak, Rouault's friend Maritain delivered a series of public lectures devoted to explaining the German war machine as a manifestation of German *Kultur*, from Martin Luther through Nietzsche. The genealogy had clearly been thought through prior to the war.[40]) The inscription here is among Rouault's most ironic: "Let the little children come to me" is a quotation from Jesus here put into the teacher's mouth.[41]As noted earlier, Rouault's father had taken him out of a Protestant school after a discipline perceived as overly harsh. If this work refers back to that childhood memory, the insertion of Jesus' words into this particular teacher might be intended to evoke Lutheran Protestantism as well.

Finally, the *Bureaucrate* (1917) takes us to the far side of the Great War and close to the end of the production of these caricatured "types." With crossed eyes and crooked spectacles dangling from his ears, the bureaucrat is one of the most appealing of Rouault's 1902-1919 grotesques. As we might expect, however, it too suggests a dangerous undertow, produced as it was during the darkest hour of France's wartime involvement. 1917 was a year of mutinies and enormous despair in France as the trench stalemate continued, and the Allies lost the assistance of Czarist Russia after the October Bolshevik Revolution. The war was seen as having been produced by bureaucrats invested in maintaining France's capitalist and colonialist interests. The linkage between civilian and military interests is suggested by the parallel of the bureaucrat's spectacles with those of the German officer depicted in *Loin du sourire de Reims* (1922, **no. 27yy**). Since *Bureaucrate* was produced at the moment in which the balance of powers would be tipped by the United States' declaration of war in early April 1917, it is fitting that it was purchased by an American, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, and later donated to the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

In addition to these small unmasked grotesques, the period following Rouault's 1905 "revelation" also saw the appearance of the major types for which Rouault is most known: clowns, criminal justice figures, prostitutes, and Christ. Judgment plays a central role in all of them, especially the capacity to judge one's own interior state and the continuity or disjunction between semblance and reality.

One of the most remarkable pieces produced during this period is *Christ aux outrages* (1905, **no. 6**), a landmark work dating from the same year as Rouault's "revelation" of the old clown. As Jean-Marie Tézé notes, it signals a thoroughly experimental style that signifies perhaps better than any other Rouault's definitive break with his academic training.[42] Its subject matter, too, was radically experimental. Because Rouault would later become identified as a "religious painter," it is understandable that the seismic shift here would be overlooked. It takes some digging in order to uncover the innovation.

Among the vast quantity of work produced between 1902 and 1909, Rouault produced only five known pieces on a religious subject (including *Christ aux outrages*). Surveying what counted as "religious" works for Rouault before 1902, we see that they were nearly all (with the exceptions of *Hermit, Samuel in prayer*, and *Saint Cecilia*) Biblical tableaux:[43]

1891: The Road to Calvary
1892: Return of the Prodigal Son
1892: Gethsemane
1892: Job
1893: Hermit
1893: Samson turning the Mill
1894: Child Jesus among the Doctors
1895: Dead Christ wept over by the Holy Women
1895: The Kiss of Judas
1895-1900: Samuel in prayer [?]
1896: Saint Cecilia
1897: Return of the Prodigal Son

Fig. 1. Georges Rouault, *Christ Crowned with Thorns*, 1898-1900. Photo courtesy Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris

After the death of Moreau we see the same pattern:

1899: Christ and the Disciples at Emmaus
1901: Daniel defending Suzanne
1901: Salomé
1901: Christ and Disciples

Put another way: the only work Rouault completed between the ages of twenty and thirty (1891-1901) offering any hint of the "religious" (i.e., "neo-medieval" or "neo-primitivist") works to come is a medium-sized piece in charcoal from 1898-1900: *Christ couronné d'épines* (**fig. 1**[44]) , executed sometime after Moreau's death and before Rouault's stay at Ligugé. It seems safe to conclude two things: first, *Christ couronné d'épines* was composed as a vehicle of mourning; second, for Rouault, the Academic style in which this work was composed had lost its capacity to fulfill what Freud called the "work of mourning" (*Trauerarbeit*). Stuck in melancholy, Rouault could not mourn.[45]

Thus, when Rouault "returned" to "religious" works after 1901—a return with a significant difference—he did so only in 1904, the year he read

Fig. 2. Georges Rouault, *La Sainte Face* (Holy Face), 1904. Photo courtesy Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris

Fig. 3. Photographic image of the Shroud; from Paul Vignon, *Le linceul du Christ: Étude scientifique* (Paris: Masson et Cie, 1902)

Bloy's work and met the writer. Two works produced that year signaled Rouault's radical break with his Salon-Symbolist past, and both of them did so by employing what we can now see as a typically "modernist" move—namely, a recovery of "primitivism" (in this case, the Middle Ages).[46] In one of these two, his first known *La Sainte Face* (**fig. 2**[47]), Rouault appropriated this medieval type which he would reproduce many times during the rest of his career (**nos. 41, 71, 76–78, 80–83, 87, 88**). The other, a very small pastel entitled *Christ aux outrages* (Christ Mocked, 1904-1909?[48]), also appropriated Byzantine-medieval iconography, a frontal portrait of Christ's head crowned with thorns and dripping blood.

The 1904 coincidence of the encounter with Bloy and the production of the Holy Face seems to mark a definitive moment for Rouault: finally, a release of the melancholic paralysis and incapacity to move beyond Moreau's death. But this moment does not seem to have been possible without the groundwork laid in 1902 by at least three events. First, as noted above, it was the year Rouault went to Évian for his therapeutic cure, which seemed to restore at least enough stability to embark on a new life. Second, it was the year of the blockbuster exhibition of "Flemish primitives" in Bruges, one that would soon be followed by others.[49] Just one year after Rouault's 1901 sojourn at Ligugé with Huysmans (for whom the "Flemish primitive" Matthias Grünewald was the solution to "supernatural realism"[50]), this rehabilitation of the primitives in the age of neo-primitivism (spearheaded by Paul Gauguin) offered a way forward by recovering the past. Third, it was the year in which an acquaintance of Rouault, Dr. Paul Vignon, published his book on the recently photographed Shroud of Turin. The images in this work made a strong impact on the artist (**fig. 3**).[51]

The *Christ aux outrages* (**no. 6**) displayed in *Mystic Masque* was painted just one year after the two precedent setting works of 1904. The title alludes to Christ's being mocked by the soldiers while he was held in custody prior to his crucifixion, a scene of classic dramatic irony. While the king is not correctly recognized as the king, he is subjected to mocking parody, covered with a cloak of royal purple, crowned with thorns, and addressed with the greeting "All hail" even as he is spat upon. Composed as it was in 1905—the end-point of four

years of anti-clerical legislation culminating in the Act of Separation of Church and State—it would also seem to be a response to this event.[52] Finally, the 1905 Salon d'automne was that which provoked Vauxcelles to coin the term "*Fauves*" (Wild Beasts); this frenzied head of Christ bears the flagellations of humanity at its most bestial. Jean-Marie Tézé writes: "this violent image obliges us not to separate the violence of human beings from the blood of Christ."[53]

Rouault's overturning of conventions continues when we see that his closest parallel to Christ being mocked are his representations of two prostitutes given the harsh name of "whores": *Filles* (1905, **no. 7a-b**). Christ and the whores were done in the same year, in exactly the same dimensions, with the same media. Indeed, given the identical characteristics, it is difficult to imagine that *Christ aux outrages* and *Filles* were not at some moment standing side-by-side in his atelier near the Moulin Rouge. Clearly, Christ mocked and the whores are meant to be identified with one another, two manifestations of a single mechanism—both are masked figures performing a masque as they entertain others. The masks of both are mis-judged.[54]

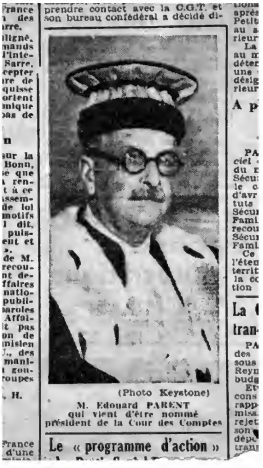
The mocked Christ and prostitutes are joined by a third representative of masked figures who entertain: *Tête de clown* (ca. 1907, **no. 8**), composed at roughly the same time and in an almost identical style, links the clown to both Christ and the prostitutes. In another clown produced around the same time, *Clown (buste)* (1907 or 1908, **no. 9**), the position of the clown's head mirrors that of the mocked Christ. Both heads are tilted upwards as if looking at spectators in a loge above them. Recalling the words of Rouault's 1905 letter to Schuré, the spectators viewing these performers "from slightly above" should be able to discern "a life of infinite sadness" beneath the appearance of "brilliant scintillating objects, made to amuse."[55]

In sum: the figure of Christ mocked is archetypal, the invisible reality "suggested" (in Mallarmé's symbolist formula) by visible clowns and prostitutes. Christ is cloaked in his sparkling costume, an entertainer performing "a DIVINE COURT CASE" (Bloy) for those who mistake semblance for reality.

V. 1907: Palace of Justice

Still another iconography of judgment began to emerge in 1907: figures in the criminal justice system. At the suggestion of a judicial magistrate, Rouault began to frequent the Palais de Justice (just as Daumier and others had done before him[56]) and sketch judges, lawyers, accused and condemned. One of the earliest examples is *L'Accusé* (1907, **no. 5**). In contrast to the bright pastels and lightning strokes of Christ, the prostitutes and the clowns, the heavy solidity of this somber oil painting, reflecting the gravity of the moment, is almost unbearable. Characteristic of the first two years of courtroom observation in which Rouault tried to represent all the figures present (his later works pare the number down to three or two), there are at least six identifiable persons: the accused defendant in the top rung; two guards, one on either side of him; the judge to the far left, his bright highlighted red robe emerging out of the black shadows; and in the lower rung, at least two lawyers in black robes with their identifiable white.

Just as Christ mocked captures a very particular moment of misjudgment in time, so too the moment chosen here allows Rouault to represent a judgment in the process of being formed. The title makes it clear: the central figure is at the moment only "accused," not yet "condemned" (as in **no. 27v**). This is still the moment of exploration: the presentation of evidence (based on the memories of witnesses), the rhetorical (and narcissistic) displays of lawyers, the judge's attempt to sort out fact from fabrication. In Rouault's storehouse of images, the setting would have been both as recent as his new explorations at the Palais de Justice and as old as his childhood immersion in Daumier's *gens de justice* (cf. *Vous avez perdu votre procès ...* , in Schloesser "1871-1901"). But in between these two moments lies a third image, an experience that Rouault knew too well: *L'Enfant Jésus parmi les docteurs* (see Schloesser, "1871-1901"), the episode in which both the canvas and the competition for the Concours Chenavard had been about mistaken judges. It is the act of interrogation in a setting of asymmetrical power. Judgment may be faulty.


prendre contact avec la C.G.T. et son bureau confédéral a décidé di-

(Photo Keystone)

M. Edouard PARENT qui vient d'être nommé président de la Cour des Comptes

Le « programme d'action »

Fig. 4a. Judge, press-clipping, Rouault's personal collection. Photo courtesy Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris

a obsèques de Paul Matter, premier président honoraire de la cour de cassation, ont été célébrées hier

Fig. 4b. Judges, press-clipping, Rouault's personal collection. Photo courtesy Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris

Given Rouault's attraction to and intimate acquaintance with the thought of Pascal, it cannot be mere coincidence that for Pascal a primary example of self-deception in the world comes in the world of the judiciary (**figs. 4a** and **4b**). (Pascal's father was a judge and a noble of the robe, i.e., ennobled through holding a judicial office.) In his *Pensées*, Pascal uses the judiciary to contemplate this "mystery": although the imagination often triumphs over reason, reason never seems capable of overcoming imagination.

> Our magistrates have well understood this mystery. Their red robes, the ermine in which they wrap themselves like furry cats, the palaces in which they administer justice, the fleurs-de-lis, and all such stately apparatus were truly necessary. If physicians did not have gowns and slippers, if learned doctors did not have square caps and robes four times too large, they would never have duped the world, which cannot resist so original a display. If they possessed true justice...they would have no need of square caps. The majesty of these sciences would command enough respect by itself. But having only imaginary knowledge, they must take up those vain tools that strike the imagination to which they must appeal; and in this way they do, in fact, inspire respect....We cannot even see a lawyer in cap and gown without forming a favorable opinion of his ability.[57]

All that glitters is not gold.

It should be noted that although Rouault used the figures of judges to raise the problem of epistemological certainty, he did not moralize about his judges. He would later publish this revealing passage in the highly influential periodical *Les Nouvelles Littéraires*:

> If I made such lamentable figures of the judges, it was because I no doubt revealed the anguish I felt at the sight of a human being who has to judge other men. If it so happened that I confused the head of the judge with that of the prisoner, this error merely betrayed my own confusion.... I cannot condemn the judges themselves![58]

If the figure of the clown had a long genealogy in the nineteenth century as the self-portrait of the

artist, it is difficult not to see Rouault's "Accused" playing a somewhat similar role in 1907. Judgments of his work by both professional critics as well as the general public could be severe. In this same year he received perhaps the most severe judgment—and the one that unnerved him at a very deep level—at the hands of Léon Bloy. At the Salon des Indépendants held at the Grand Palais in the spring of 1907, Rouault had once again exhibited prostitutes along with ceramics and circus paintings. Bloy recorded his visit to the Salon on April 30, 1907:

> As for the paintings of nudes, they are a hideous hell, and Rouault, alas! his works take first place. I have tried in vain to understand how it can be that an artist who is exactly the opposite of someone who is stupid and despicable—the only one perhaps who can remind you again of a Rembrandt—should dedicate himself to this abominable caricature that deteriorates in a deadly way, in its own person, the most manly painting of our time.[59]

Bloy followed up his diary entry with a letter to Rouault that is extremely significant for the way in which it constructed a realist aesthetic as being incompatible with religious practice.

> My dear friend, I saw the Salon des Indépendants yesterday. Independent of what? These slaves of stupidity and absolute ignorance! Naturally I saw your unique and sempiternal canvases: always the same slut [*salope*] and the same clown, with the single and lamentable difference that each time the worthlessness appears greater.
>
> Today I have two things to say to you, only two, the last! After which you will be no more to me than a mere acquaintance! First, you are attracted exclusively to the ugly; you seem to be enthralled by the hideous. Secondly, if you were a man of prayer, a communicant, you would not be able to paint such terrible canvases.[60]

This is the same person to whom Rouault had fled precisely because, as noted above in his letter intended for l'abbé Mugnier—"The Catholics have killed me…at a moment when I was seeking profound consolation"—he thought Bloy would be different. When juxtaposing these lines of April 30, 1907 with the contemporaneous production of *L'Accusé* (**no. 5**), the almost unbearably dark turmoil of the courtroom judgment seems very close to Rouault's self-interrogation. He is a man who stands accused—by Bloy, and perhaps, by himself.

VI. 1908: Re-reading Whores via Pascal and Freud

Though Rouault might have suffered from inner conflict, it did not prevent him from continuing to produce images of prostitutes such as the *Fille (Femme aux Cheveux Roux)* painted the following year in 1908 (**no. 10**). This piece exemplifies the prostitutes who "remain to this day a tour-de-force of Fauve color, brushwork and composition and are a highpoint of the artist's early career."[61] It also provides an opportunity to reflect on various interpretations of Rouault's prostitutes.[62]

A heavily moralistic overlay has been placed on these figures, not only due to the conventional bourgeois mores that reigned during the Belle Époque, but also because of influential Catholic commentators on Rouault's work. Most important was that of the philosopher Jacques Maritain who, as noted above, had made Rouault's acquaintance at the Bloy home in 1905. Maritain would later interpret Rouault's prostitutes thus: "these prostitutes and these clowns, this monstrous and miserable flesh, enslaved in these hidden harmonies and these precious transparencies of the most complex matter—this is the wound of Sin, it is the sadness of fallen Nature, penetrated by an observation without complicity and an art which does not bend."[63]

Regardless of how one might approach the prostitutes, the chronological and compositional linkage between them, the clowns and Christ mocked

LÉON BLUM
L'ACADEMIE a voté dédaigneusement
SUITE PAGE 3

Fig. 5. Academicians, press-clipping, Rouault's personal collection. Photo courtesy Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris.

provokes a pause. As seen above, the 1905 *Christ aux outrages* and *Filles* are identical in several respects. Similarly, it is difficult to see Maritain's association with the "flesh" [*chair*] of the clowns as "miserable," let alone "monstrous." Moreover, in light of Rouault's specific understanding about the archetypal nature of clowns as interpretative ciphers for human being in general, it is difficult to see the sadness of clowns and prostitutes as being due to "Sin" and "fallen Nature"—unless, perhaps, in a social sense, i.e., of the bourgeois patrons who pay these figures to put on bright costumes and perform as entertainers.

Alternative understandings of these *misérables* would come from at least two sources close to Rouault's heart. First, his childhood immersion in the realists, especially Daumier and Manet, as well as the influence of Victor Hugo, for whom *les misérables* were the true heroes of the earth. Second, from Pascal:

> Man's greatness (*grandeur*) lies in his knowing himself to be wretched (*misérable*).
> A tree does not know itself to be wretched.
> So it is to be wretched to know oneself wretched,
> but it is to be great to know that one is wretched.[64]

For Pascal, the central issue is not whether certain human beings are in a state of *misère* while others are not; Pascal assumes that wretchedness (*misère*) is a given in the human condition. Rather, the key point is an epistemological one about self-knowledge and self-awareness, the capacity to form a true judgment about oneself. "Thought constitutes the greatness of man," wrote Pascal; "…in proportion as men possess light, they discover both the greatness and the wretchedness of man. In a word, man knows that he is wretched. He is therefore wretched, because he is so; but he is really great *because he knows* it."[65]

Rouault directly addressed his painting of prostitutes in essays published two decades later. In some lines of verse interspersed within prose, Rouault opposes his prostitutes (named "Madeleine" after the gospel figure Mary Magdalene, identified in tradition as a prostitute) over and against those who live with pretensions. As in his *Miserere* plate illustrating these same lines (**no. 27t**), Rouault first contrasted the prostitute with a self-satisfied *bourgeoise* sure of her salvation:

> If some Lady from a chic neighborhood
> Looks with pity on Madeleine
> Having reserved front-row seats in Heaven
> Madame-of-all-the-Virtues
> Will also see in this fallen girl
> An object of eternal disdain[66]

Rouault's contrast between the prostitute and the presumptuous churchgoer again evokes Pascal: "Man is neither angel nor brute, and the unfortunate thing is that he who would act the angel acts the brute."[67]

Rouault then broadens the category of the presumptuous to include the Academicians (**fig. 5**) for whom he has a special contempt:

> These poor Madeleines, whether repentant or not, have better espoused "my vision" and touched me more deeply than so many Academicians think they do.

> Why are you crying, Madeleine,
> On your bed, drunk as you are with pain?[68]

As in the *Filles/Poulot* triptych that enraged Bloy in 1905, we see Rouault's distinction between antagonists and protagonists: academics and, in general, those esteemed by the world on the one hand (**nos. 12-15, 16, 19, 27t, 27u, 27w, 27ww, 28h, 28o, 47e, 47g, 54**); prostitutes on the other (**nos. 7ab, 10, 27r, 27s**).

In a second essay published a year later, Rouault again defended his illustrations of prostitutes. The absence of moralism is striking:

> As far as I am concerned the only thing I want to do is transcribe my emotions in material or plastic form. You tell me that you do not like my degraded and deformed women. Who says that they should not be painted this way? You tell me that here you recognize a moral objective that is incompatible with art. I do not intend to moralize. Art is infinitely above morality.[69]

In sum: Rouault's 1908 *Fille* allows us to reconsider his prostitutes. Like his many circus figures, Rouault's prostitutes paint their faces (*se grimer*) or "put on masks." This self-conscious application of the mask for the sake of the *divertissement* (diversion, entertainment) of others better falls in line with Rouault's Pascalian worldview, and this re-reading of the prostitutes allows us, then, to put these figures back into the larger *dramatis personae* of Rouault's world. They are figures whose dignity (or even "grandeur") consists in the fact that they know themselves as self-masked—a theme thoroughly contemporaneous with Freud's psychoanalytic science of self-knowledge in this period.[70] Although Maritain might have been preoccupied with purity concerns,[71] his interpretation of the prostitutes should not be viewed as interchangeable with Rouault's.

On January 27, 1908, at age thirty-six, Rouault married Marthe Le Sidaner, the sister of pointillist painter Henri Le Sidaner and a trained pianist who would support the family by giving music lessons (just as her own "penniless mother brought up the nine children by giving piano lessons"[72]). The newlyweds set up their living quarters in the Musée Gustave Moreau, and their first daughter, Geneviève, was born later that year.[73] The fact that this small family needed to live in the museum suggests the seriousness of their impoverished situation. A year earlier, in July 1907, the dealer Ambroise Vollard had contacted Rouault about purchasing some ceramics. Part of the deal would have included sealing a contract of exclusivity with Vollard as a merchant. Although Rouault had refused, preferring instead to maintain his independence, financial circumstances would eventually force him to yield and hand over his freedom in exchange for security.

VII. 1910–1913: Baptized, Beaten, Extinguished

In early 1910, at the age of thirty-eight, Rouault held his first independent exhibition at the Galerie Druet from February 21 to March 5. It is curious that, casting around for someone to write the catalogue preface, he settled on Jacques Maritain. Maritain, who had just moved to Versailles with his wife Raïssa, was at that time completely unknown to any public. Perhaps it is for this reason (or perhaps it was for fear of angering Maritain's godfather, Bloy) that Rouault asked Maritain to come up with an appropriate pseudonym under which to write. Maritain chose "Jacques Favelle."[74]

A year later, on May 27, 1911, Georges Rouault celebrated his fortieth birthday. Perhaps his production of two versions of *Le Baptême du Christ* (**no. 17**) in this year were meant to echo his own infant baptism (June 25, 1871). Both of these circular illustrations were very likely studies for ceramic plates—they resemble a number of ceramics that year, mostly small saucers decorated with nudes, but also heads of clowns and of Christ.[75] The piece is especially noteworthy for its overt retrieval of Rouault's stained-glass apprenticeship in adolescence, a device for which he would later become known but which was rare in 1911. The legend for Rouault's baptismal scene later composed for the *Miserere—"Nous... c'est en sa mort que nous avons été baptisés"* (**no. 27cc**)—is a paraphrase of Saint Paul's letter to the Romans: "Do you not know

that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?"[76] In recalling the ancient symbolism of baptism as death and by explicitly evoking the Christian dialectic—no life without death—Rouault's religiosity again shows itself to be profoundly scriptural and without sentimentality.

On July 16, Rouault sent the first letter of what would become a voluminous correspondence with the writer André Suarès.[77] Suarès had just published an article on Ingres in *La Grande Revue*, and Rouault wrote him saying that he had tried loving Ingres out of a childlike Christianity. Unfortunately, Ingres had "too much health" and for this Rouault "was punished." He was instead now reading *Crime and Punishment* by Dostoevsky, an artist more in tune with Rouault's own soul. (One year earlier, Suarès had completed writing a chapter on Dostoevsky, judging him to be "the deepest heart, the greatest conscience of the modern world."[78]) "Yes, in spite of my infirmity," wrote Rouault, "I feel and I discover new beauties in each instant and what beauties, unknown and marvelous…in the midst of the most tragic and debased realities transfigured by genius…."[79]

The following April 1912, Rouault wrote Suarès that he and Marthe were expecting their third child in August. In need of quarters larger than that afforded by the Moreau museum, they would be moving to Versailles. A humorous anecdote illustrates that poverty followed the Rouaults into the outskirts. Rouault went to tell his landlord (a veterinary surgeon) that he was going to complain to the local Committee for Public Health about the infestation of rats in his and Marthe's squalid home. The landlord answered: "It'll do you no good. I'm the chairman."[80]

Two months later, the move to Versailles completed, Rouault wrote Suarès on June 22, relating that his father had died on the 16th. Twenty years earlier, Rouault had entered the atelier of Moreau, the leisured Parisian *flâneur* whom Rouault would address as his "Father." The letter to Suarès suggests that now, at forty-one, the artist from working-class Belleville had still not yet reconciled himself with his younger self. "My father died on Monday," wrote Rouault,

> and now that I am no longer struggling against death which I never realized was so close, here I am lost like a child in the middle of a dark night [*d'une nuit obscure*]…I believed that I was strong and here I am beaten and extinguished [*je me croyais fort et me voilà abbatu et écrasé*]; I never had any communion of art with my father…he didn't speak about it and I have the vivid feeling that he had never understood what I was doing…"[81]

Before Rouault had the chance to put this into the mail, a letter from Suarès happened to arrive. This gave Rouault the opportunity to add a very long addendum to what he had already written, laying out the problems of judgment and of knowledge contemplated during the past five years in courtroom observations. In lines he had just written, Rouault noted, he was "judging him like a cripple or a blind man." Alluding to Montaigne's skeptical motto—*Que sais-je?* (What do I know?)—Rouault added: "*What do we know* [*Que savons-nous*], really, about what goes on in the mind and heart of simple people who express themselves in neither theories nor eloquent dissertations?"[82]

The death of his father proved to be a baptism for Rouault—a dying and rebirth. It gave him a new project, a new identity, and a new name: *Miserere*, the initial Latin word of the fifty-first Psalm, associated in Catholic liturgy with penitential seasons and with offices for the deceased:

> *Miserere mei, Deus: secundum magnam misericordiam tuam.*
> Have mercy on me, God: according to your steadfast love.

Rouault began a sketchbook in which he inserted both images and texts (**figs. 6a-d**) in preparation for what he imagined as a large-scale work. This project, eventually the *Miserere* published thirty-six years later, would give Rouault's life and art both unity and identity.

In the following year (1913), Ambroise Vollard revisited Rouault. Six years after Rouault had initially declined Vollard's offer, he had need for

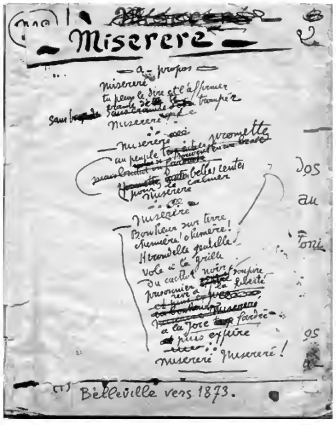


Fig. 6a. Page from the 1912 *Miserere* notebook. A sheet of paper which does not fully cover the page beneath it (note words "Belleville circa 1873" jutting out at bottom) has been pasted over the notebook's original first page to provide this short "foreword" (*à propos*). The rhymed verses are an ode to the word "Miserere." Photo courtesy Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris.

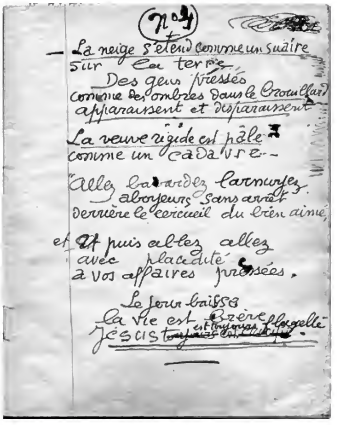


Fig. 6b. Page from the 1912 *Miserere* notebook demonstrating Rouault's habit of writing verse with multiple layers of meaning. First line reads: "The snow stretches out like a *suaire* over the earth" (*suaire* can mean either "shroud" or Veronica's "sudarium.") In the last line Rouault has crossed out the words "*toujours est crucifié*" and replaced them with "*est toujours flagellé*": "Jesus is still (or forever) scourged." Photo courtesy Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris.

Fig. 6c. Page from the 1912 *Miserere* notebook. The figure may be a widow and perhaps corresponds to the third set of verses in fig 6b: "The rigid widow is pale / like a cadavre." It appears in the published Miserere (1948) with the caption: "We must die, we and all that is ours" (no. 27qq). Photo courtesy Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris.

Fig. 6d. Page from the 1912 *Miserere* notebook. The figure appears in the first triptych in the published Miserere (1948) with words altered from fig 6b: *...toujours flagellé* (forever scourged). Its importance for Rouault can be seen in plate nos. 27c, 27v, 27y, 27ff, and 90. Photo courtesy Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris.

greater financial security with a home (no matter how squalid) in Versailles, with three children and a fourth on the way. (One might also speculate that, if Rouault had felt a need to prove to his father his ability to remain independent, that need had now passed away.) Rouault agreed to sell the dealer his complete atelier of 770 works in exchange for exclusive representation by Vollard.

One of Rouault's recurring favorite lines for illustration, "Are we not all *forçats*?," appears in his *Miserere* notebook at this time, very likely by July 1914 at the latest.[83] The word *forçat* denotes a person condemned to forced labor (*condamné aux travaux forcés*)—a convict or galley slave. Very likely Rouault's preference for this word (instead of the less multivalent "slave") owed something to his affection for Dostoevsky (who had himself been a *forçat*, sentenced to four years of hard labor in Siberia), especially *Crime and Punishment* which Rouault had read in the summer of 1911.[84] Additionally, given that Rouault had read André Suarès's study of "Three Men" (Pascal, Dostoevsky, and Ibsen) by mid-June 1913,[85] Rouault might also have been drawn to the image of the *forçat* because of the linkages between Dostoevsky and Pascal.

Pascal's image of the human being as a criminal condemned to death is famous or infamous depending on one's perspective. Voltaire, for example, thought it absurd: "To see the universe as a dungeon, and all humanity as criminals awaiting execution," he wrote, "is the idea of a fanatic.... The human being was born for action," he added, "just as fire tends to rise and the rock to fall."[86] But Rouault's affection for the *forçat* image suggests affinities with Pascal's conception. As Victor Brombert comments:

> In one of his characteristic telescopings of concrete and spiritual realities, Pascal insists on the horror of any confinement and on the notion of punishment associated with it: "*De là vient que la prison est un supplice si horrible*" [From this comes the fact that prison is such horrible torment] (139). And when it comes to summing up the terror and hopelessness of man's condition, it is quite naturally a concentration-camp image that Pascal's imagination develops: "*Qu'on s'imagine un nombre d'hommes dans les chaînes, et tous condamné à la mort...*" [Let one imagine a number of men in chains, all condemned to death...] (199). A death sentence hangs over humanity: the prison image, in Pascal, is indeed bound up with capital punishment and thus with the very essence of man's anguish, mortality.
>
> The *pensée* which follows...illumines this hallucinating tableau of a penal colony. [87]

Whether derived from Pascal or Dostoevsky or both, Rouault used the image of the *forçat* at just this time in his *Miserere* sketchbook, and it seems likely that he thought of himself now as this kind of forced laborer or galley slave as well.

This decision invites speculation about multiple layers of meaning in *Acrobates XIII* (1913, **no. 18**). The work comes from a series of fifteen acrobats, most of which bear the alternative title *Lutteur* (male wrestler) or *Lutteuse* (female wrestler).[88] The noun comes from the verb *lutter*—to wrestle or, more commonly, to struggle—as used in Rouault's letter to Suarès on the death of his father the year before: "*je ne lutte plus contre la mort*" (I no longer struggle against death).[89] Not insignificantly, the verb is also prominent in the Biblical story of Jacob wrestling with the angel, a favorite theme in symbolist art and the only work-in-progress that the young Rouault had asked his master permission to see.[90] Like many of Rouault's prostitutes (including the *Fille* [1908] considered above), all the acrobats in this series have their arms extended in a twisted pose over their heads as if they are wrestling themselves—an image of Eugène Delacroix's of which Rouault was undoubtedly aware.[91] When compared with the large preparatory oil study for the *Miserere* series produced sometime after 1920—*Ne sommes-nous pas tous forçats?* (**no. 32**, considered below)—the capacity of Rouault's protagonists to contort their agile bodies would seem to take on a meaning beyond flexibility for the sake of entertainment. They seem to wrestle with existence itself, an anxious yet unending struggle to escape confinement, servitude, and even death.[92] It

would hardly seem coincidental that *Acrobates XIII* was painted in the same year that Rouault agreed to enter a long indentured servitude to Vollard.

VIII. 1914–1918: Rouault's Second War

As the Great War broke out in August 1914, not long after the Rouault family had moved to another residence in Versailles at 15 impasse des Gendarmes, they fled to Brittany—first, to Saint-Efflam and then in October, further west to La Martinière. As the Germans approached, the Prussian siege of Paris in winter 1870-71 was still vivid, if not in memory then most certainly in legend. When it became clear a year later that the Germans would not be advancing beyond the front established by the new trench warfare, the family returned to Versailles in November 1915.

The increasingly horrifying war with Germany is evoked in Rouault's painting of *Le Superhomme* (1916, **no. 19**). Like its similarly titled predecessor, *L'Avantageux/Surhomme* (**no. 14**), it fits into the category of caricatures and satirical types (in the 1902-19 period) and is a superb oversized example of what tend to be small works done with lighter materials. The medium here fits the message: this "superman" is super-sized to the point of grotesqueness, physically incapable of the kind of elastic contortions that mark protagonists like the prostitute, the acrobat, and the mocked Christ.

Unlike the 1913 *Surhomme*, the 1916 *Superhomme* is not playful but rather profoundly bitter. Its title more explicitly evokes the *Übermensch* (Superman or Overman), Nietzsche's remedy for what he considered to be Christianity's life-hating stance.

> And Zarathustra spake thus unto the people:
>
> I teach you the Superman. Man is something that is to be surpassed. What have ye done to surpass man?…
>
> The Superman is the meaning of the earth. Let your will say: The Superman shall be the meaning of the earth!
>
> I conjure you, my brethren, remain true to the earth, and believe not those who speak unto you of superearthly hopes! Prisoners are they, whether they know it or not.[93]

The *Übermensch* had a much darker meaning after two years of wartime horror in which young German soldiers carried Nietzsche's *Also Sprach Zarathustra* to the battlefront in their backpacks. Rouault produced his *Superhomme* in the year it seemed as if Europe had gone completely mad. The Battle of Verdun (February 21-December 18, 1916) saw more than a quarter-million deaths and approximately half-a-million wounded; the Battle of the Somme (July 1-November 18, 1916) witnessed more than a million casualties, over 146,000 of whom were either killed or missing. As this horrific year drew to a close, Louis Mairet wrote from the trenches in late December 1916, "Confronted by the spectacle of a scientific struggle in which Progress is used to return to Barbarism, and by the spectacle of a civilization turning against itself to destroy itself, reason cannot cope."[94] Rouault's *Superhomme* is his own variation on this widespread belief in 1916: "progress" and "civilization" had been unmasked as barbarism.

Just as the posture of *Acrobates XIII* (**no. 18**) served Rouault as an archetype for his protagonists, so too the posture of *Superhomme* served as an archetype for his antagonists. In the depiction of a Great War German officer entitled *"Plus le coeur est noble, moins le col est roide,"* (1926, **no. 27ww**), the features imitate the *Superhomme*: the nose is upturned (as in Daumier's lawyers), the collar is high and stiff (preventing movement and nearly choking the wearer), and the right hand is extended in an imperious way. (The hand and arm position is identical to that in three works entitled *Officier allemand* [German officer], all dated 1915-17.[95]) Rouault entitled a variant of this plate "Wilhelm II" as if to make the Great War connection inescapably clear. Another *Miserere* plate, influenced by Rouault's contemporaneous work on Ubu, transfers

the *Superhomme*'s gestures to the Ubu Roi figure: *nous croyant rois* (1923, **no. 27f**), produced just five years after the Armistice, exhibits the same exaggerated nose, stiff oversized body, imperious extended hand. Similar figures can be seen in the *Ubu* series itself: see both *L'Administrateur colonial* (1928, **no. 28h**) and the rounder and even more oversized figure of Père Ubu singing (*Le Père Ubu chantre* [1928, **no. 28k**]).

A comparison of *Acrobates XIII* (1913) and *Superhomme* (1916), then, succinctly shows Rouault's fundamental stylistic opposition between protagonists and antagonists crystallized by the mid-1910s. The inner life of his characters manifests itself outwardly on their bodies: protagonists are flexible, contorted, and endlessly wrestling; antagonists are rigid, bloated, and immobile. Moreover, his antagonists (like *Superhomme*) are not bothered by their immobility. Fundamentally presumptuous and satisfied with their place in the world, they would not want to alter their positions—even if their bodies were capable of movement.

IX. 1916–1920: All about Ubu

It is not a coincidence that the wartime *Superhomme* and the timeless King Ubu share the same bodily forms. In 1916, Rouault made a crucial decision that would affect his life for the next sixteen years.[96] In exchange for Vollard's commitment to publish Rouault's projected two-volume *Miserere et Guerre* (roughly translated as Mercy and War), Rouault agreed to illustrate a large deluxe volume that would collate Vollard's texts based on the further adventures of Alfred Jarry's notorious fictional character, Père Ubu.[97] The intersection of the world war and the agreement to illustrate Vollard's *Ubu* is nicely captured in a work held by the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art. On the front side is Rouault's *Von X (Portrait of a German Officer)*; on the reverse side is *The Palace of Ubu Roi* (both 1916).[98] As in other Rouault illustrations entitled *Monsieur X* or *Madame X*, the "X" simply denotes "Everyman" or "Everywoman" or, in this case, Every-Officer with the German aristocratic name prefix "Von." Although Rouault's use of both sides of the paper was probably due to a lack of money, it provides a wonderfully concrete intertextual reading: the interrelationship of the noble German officer with the ruthlessly murderous King Ubu in the horrifying year of Verdun and the Somme illuminates Rouault's views of both characters.

In 1917, after negotiations that had been going on since their original 1913 agreement, Rouault received payment from Vollard for the 770 works of his atelier. (Since the Rouaults had left Versailles and moved back into Paris in June 1916, it seems likely they were able to do this because they anticipated the financial settlement. Their new home at 77 rue Blomet was in the 15th arrondissement in which Rouault had attended school as a child.) Rouault's new contractual relationship with Vollard coincided with the death in November 1917 of Léon Bloy to whom Rouault had remained faithful. In yet another way, 1917 marked a threshold crossed by Rouault, a certain amount of closure to his first forty years spent largely in great poverty and a door opening to a new life that would be less free but more stable.

With the money in hand and his new relationship of exclusivity with Vollard, Rouault began in earnest working on illustrating *Ubu*. Graphic work for Vollard would now consume Rouault's waking hours, and this is the period during which his free-floating caricatures of male and female "types" and "grotesqueries" disappear. One of the last of these was the 1917 *Bureaucrate* (**no. 16**, discussed above). Rouault would now channel his satirical energy into producing fantastical characters to populate the fictional colonial world of *Ubu*.

An early study for *Ubu* can be seen in the *Projet pour Ubu colon* (ca. 1917, **no. 20**). In the foreground lies the elongated body of a native in a reclining position—closely resembling one of Rouault's prostitutes or odalisques; the arm extended overhead in the *Projet* can now be seen as a figural gesture typical of Rouault's protagonists. (The same bodily figure can be seen in the woodcut that eventually appeared in the *Réincarnations*, **no. 30**). Yet an ominous note is sounded as a colonial soldier appears on the horizon, providing a study in contrast to the native. His unrealistically (for a soldier) obese body, heavily clad in what seems to be

an overcoat and helmet and bearing a rifle over his shoulder, seems to be on the threshold of contaminating this natural paradise.

Set against this backdrop, the reclining native body not only evokes odalisques, prostitutes, and nudes, but also perhaps Daumier's massacred man in the *Rue Transnonain, 15 Avril 1834* (see fig. 5 in Schloesser "1871-1901"). Daumier's figure had been explicitly referenced in Auguste Roubille's cartoon diptych, *"Quant à l'ouvrier, s'il est quelquefois ignoble.....il est souvent sublime"* (see Blake essay, figs. 1 and 2). On the left-hand page, a syndicalist worker towers over government soldiers presumably trying to put down a strike: "As for the worker, if he is sometimes horrid.." On the right-hand page, this same working-class man has been drafted into the colonial army seen marching behind the corpses of two massacred natives: "...he is often sublime." Published in the satirical anarchist journal *L'Assiette au beurre*, Roubille's cartoon explicitly draws the parallel between the French Republican Empire's contempt for the working class (exhibited in Daumier's massacre) and its corresponding contempt for the natives it has colonized.

Rouault's evolving style, both lighter in material and firmer in stroke, was partly a child of necessity, born of the need to produce a great volume of work as quickly as possible. Rouault acknowledged this in a letter to Vollard dated June 21, 1918: "my payback consists in discharging onto the 600-plus francs of paper bought by you all or just about all that my imagination can rapidly give birth to, both violent and evocative; I repeat, it is necessary that it go like the wind, like lightning..."[99] But it was also a function of the spirit of the book, mirrored in the exaggerated traits of the characters which suggest a "primitive brutality."[100]

As Rouault continued to work primarily on *Ubu* throughout 1918, Vollard began publishing the small *Ubu* books that would eventually be collated into the large *Réincarnations du Père Ubu* (**nos. 28a–u**) for which Rouault was preparing. Vollard's *Le Père Ubu à l'hôpital* (Père Ubu in the Hospital) and *Le Père Ubu à l'aviation* (Père Ubu Flying) were both published in 1918 with illustrations by Pierre Bonnard. With the war's end now in sight, France's victory would actually increase its hold over its colonial empire, making the satirical *Ubu* all the more topical. In 1919, Vollard published *La Politique coloniale du père Ubu* (The Colonial Politics of Père Ubu) whose cover features Rouault's sketch of Ubu singing (cf. **no. 28k**).

In October that year, Rouault's *L'Enfant Jésus parmi les docteurs* (1894, discussed above) became the first of Rouault's works to be bought by the French state. It was put into the Museum of Unterlinden in Colmar.[101] Like the rest of the region of Alsace, the city of Colmar had become part of the German Empire after the French Second Empire's defeat in the 1870-1871 Franco-Prussian War. It would seem that the Third Republic was trying to "re-Frenchify" the museum in this territory which (along with Lorraine) was returned to France under the terms of the 1918 armistice. Given the circumstances of Rouault's birth as well as his involvement in three French-German wars, the placement of his first state-owned work in the Colmar museum, situated on the contested borderland, seems a fitting ending to Rouault's Second War. And given the circumstances surrounding the painting—in which both the canvas and the competition for the Concours Chenavard had been about mistaken judges—it seems a fitting end to Rouault's 1910s, a decade given over to the hard metier of unmasking.

In 1920, Rouault exhibited fifty works at La Licorne, a gallery founded and directed by Dr. Maurice Girardin, one of Rouault's most important patrons and collectors. (Girardin's collection of works by Rouault, almost 140 paintings and sketches from the crucial period 1905-1919, are today held by the Musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris).[102] The difference in tone between reviews of Rouault in the prewar era and those in this postwar epoch is remarkable. Figures that were earlier dismissed as being merely dark and depressing were now celebrated as possessing a "religious realism" that harkened back to the golden age of the "Flemish primitives"—a heritage which now, especially after the German devastation of Belgium, carried the added gravity of nationalistic pride.[103] The war had radically altered the world, and the changed context made for a vastly changed

reception of Rouault. Writing almost two years to the date after the 1918 Armistice, the reviewer for *Bonsoir* concluded: "Georges Rouault is most definitely one of the most honest and sincere artists in this time lacking both honesty and faith."[104]

Endnotes

1 Ernest Becker, *The Denial of Death* (New York: The Free Press, 1973) 27.

2 Gustave Moreau to Georges Rouault dated "Evian 21 August 93," 3 pp. handwritten ms; in Rouault Archives. I am grateful to Gilles Rouault for communicating this.

3 Georges Rouault, *Georges Rouault, forme, couleur, harmonie,* catalogue published for the Musée d'art moderne et contemporain de Strasbourg exhibition, 10 November 2006 to 18 March 2007, commissariat Fabrice Hergott (Strasbourg: Musées de Strasbourg, 2006) 242.

4 Pierre-Louis Mathieu, *Gustave Moreau*, trans. Tamara Blondel, Louise Guiney, Mark Hutchinson (New York: Flammarion, 1995) 215-217. I am grateful to Katherine Getz for this reference.

5 Brenda Assael, *The Circus and Victorian Society* (Charlottesville: Univ. of Virginia Press, 2005); *The Great Parade: Portrait of the Artist as a Clown*, ed. Jean Clair (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 2004); orig. *La grande parade: portrait de l'artiste en clown*; [Exposition "La Grande Parade. Portrait de l'Artiste en Clown", Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais, Paris, 12 mars - 31 mai 2004], ed. Jean Clair (Paris: Gallimard, 2004); Glenn Watkins, "Obsessions with Pierrot, in *Pyramids at the Louvre. Music, Culture, and Collage from Stravinsky to the Postmodernists* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard Univ. Press, 1994), 277-309; Martin Green and John Swan, *The Triumph of Pierrot: The Commedia dell'Arte and the Modern Imagination*, rev. ed. (University Park: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, [1986] 1993); Raymond Grew, "Picturing the People: Images of the Lower Orders in Nineteenth-Century French Art," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 17/1 (Summer, 1986): 203-231; Louisa E. Jones, *Sad Clowns and Pale Pierrots: Literature and the Popular Comic Arts in 19th-Century France* (Lexington, KY: French Forum, 1984); Paula Hays Harper, *Daumier's Clowns, les Saltimbanques, et les Parades: New Biographical and Political Functions for a Nineteenth Century Myth* (New York: Garland, 1981); Russell S. King, "The Poet as Clown: Variations on a Theme in Nineteenth-century French Poetry," *Orbis Litterarum* 33/3 (1978): 238–252; Francis Haskell, "The Sad Clown: Some Notes on a 19th century Myth," *French 19th-Century Painting and Literature: With Special Reference to the Relevance of Literary Subject-matter to French Painting*, ed. Ulrich Finke (New York: Harper & Row, 1972) 2-16.

6 Georges Rouault, *Cirque de l'étoile filante* (Paris: A. Vollard, 1938); qtd. in William A. Dyrness, *Rouault:*

A Vision of Suffering and Salvation (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971) 152.

7 For l'Abbé Mugnier, see Ghislain de Diesbach, *L'Abbé Mugnier, le confesseur du tout-Paris* (Paris: Perrin, 2003); *Journal de l'Abbé Mugnier (1879-1939)*, eds. Marcel Billot, Ghislain de Diesbach, Jean d'Hendecourt (Paris: Mercure de France, 1985); Marthe Bibesco, *Le confesseur et les poètes* (Paris: B. Grasset, 1970).

8 Letter of Georges Rouault entrusted to Auguste Marguillier to be delivered to Abbé Mugnier (1904); qtd. in Waldemar George and Geneviève Nouaillet-Rouault, *Rouault's Universe*, trans. Noël Lindsay (Woodbury, NY: Barron's, 1971) 65, 66; orig. George and Nouaillet-Rouault, *L'univers de Rouault* (Paris: Henri Scrépel, 1971), 65-66. Jacques Maritain's journal entry, written sometime after meeting Rouault, expresses sentiments remarkably close to the artist's: "The Christians have abandoned the poor—and the poor among the nations: the Jews—and the Poverty of the soul: authentic Reason. They horrify me." For Maritain Bloy was among Catholics "like a prophet"—i.e., "in a fury against his people. (But all the same, among the people.)" In order to be baptized himself, concluded Maritain, he would need to live like a stranger "come from outside," fleeing "the family of the satisfied who, in the name of their eternal salvation, have taken the part of those acting against the temporal salvation of the world." See Stephen Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism: Mystic Modernism in Postwar Paris, 1919-1933* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 2005) 70.

9 For this and following, see Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 64-70. For the period leading up to the "engagement" of Catholic intellectuals that would begin in the 1910s, see Hervé Serry, "Les conditions de l'engagement des intellectuels catholique laïques," *Naissance de l'intellectuel catholique* (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 2004) 27-82.

10 Roger Shattuck, *The Banquet Years; the Origins of the Avant Garde in France, 1885 to World War I: Alfred Jarry, Henri Rousseau, Erik Satie [and] Guillaume Apollinaire*, rev. ed. (1958; New York: Vintage Books, 1968); qtd. in Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 3-4.

11 For a recent edition see Léon Bloy, *Je m'accuse*, ed. Michèle Fontana (Jaignes, France: La chausse au snark, 2003).

12 Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 69.

13 Richard Panek, *The Invisible Century: Einstein, Freud, and the Search for Hidden Universes* (New York: Viking, 2004).

14 For remarks on Freud and the problem of self-knowledge at this time, see Paul Breines in this volume.

15 Dyrness 149; quoting Rouault from Jean Grenier, "Les Idées de Georges Rouault," *L'Oeil: Revue d'Art* 28 (April 1957) 31-40, see p. 34.

16 For a recent English edition see Edouard Schuré, *The Great Initiates: A Study of the Secret History of Religions*, trans. Gloria Raspberry, 2nd ed. (New York: Steinerbooks, 1992).

17 Charles Baudelaire, "The Old Acrobat," *Parisian Prowler. Le Spleen de Paris. Petits Poèmes en prose*, trans. Edward K. Kaplan, 2d ed. (1989; Athens and London: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1997) 29, 30. Naomi Ritter contrasts the conclusion of this poem to an earlier one. In "Vocations," the narrator sees the Bohemians positively, through the eyes of the boy. In "The Old Acrobat," the narrator "sees the old clown negatively, through his own eyes. In the child's naive longing for the free exotic life, Baudelaire shows just the opposite of his horror at its outcome." Ritter, "The *Saltimbanque* as Savior: Rilke, Picasso, and Apollinaire," *Art as Spectacle: Images of the Entertainer Since Romanticism* (Columbia: Univ. of Missouri Press, 1989) 151-176, see p. 165n26.

18 "The *dédoublement* thus designates the activity of a consciousness by which a man differentiates himself from the non-human world. The capacity for such duplication is rare, says Baudelaire, but belongs specifically to those who, like artists or philosophers, deal in language." Paul de Man, *Blindness & Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971) 213. John A. Ochoa provides familiar examples of this phenomenon: "Paul de Man, interested in both falls into knowledge and the failures of systems of signification, notes that one laughs at oneself after stumbling because, to use Charles Baudelaire's term, there is a *dédoublement*, a sudden escape from one's conception of oneself. *Dédoublement* can result from tripping in public, from seeing oneself in a mirror, or from realizing that one's fencing strategy is being matched too well by an opponent: each of these unexpected situations forces a reconsideration of one's concept of oneself." Ochoa, *The Uses of Failure in Mexican Literature and Identity* (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 2004) 5-6. See also Maria C. Scott, *Baudelaire's Le Spleen de Paris: Shifting Perspectives* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2005) 20.

19 Rouault might have chosen Édouard Schuré as the recipient of this crucial story since Schuré had published *Le Double* (Paris: Perrin, 1899) just six years earlier. The literary figure of "the double" had been in the air since the mid-19th century. Fyodor Dostoevsky published his novella *The Double: A Petersburg Poem* in 1846. Edgar Allan Poe's short story "William Wilson" (1839) was translated by Charles Baudelaire in February 1855 in *Le Pays* and then in Baudelaire's

collection *Nouvelles histoires par Edgar Poe* (Paris: Michel Lévy frères, 1857). Oscar Wilde, the English Decadent counterpart of J.-K. Huysmans, published *The Picture of Dorian Gray* in 1890. Joseph Conrad would write *The Secret Sharer* in 1909. In addition to these literary productions, Sigmund Freud produced a number of his landmark works between 1890 and 1901: *Studies on Hysteria*, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, and *Dora*.

20 Both French and English in Bernard Dorival and Isabelle Rouault, *Rouault: l'œuvre peint*, 2 vols. (Monte-Carlo: Éditions André Sauret, 1988) 1:40. (The OP numbers are those assigned to Rouault's works in this catalogue raisonné.)

21 Letter of Georges Rouault to André Suarès (3 March 1913), *Correspondance [de] Georges Rouault [et] André Suarès* (Paris: Gallimard, 1960) 43, emphasis original; in Dyrness, 81. For Pascal, see Pléiade 68/Lafuma 72/Sellier 106. Fragments of Pascal's *Pensées* are referenced according to their Pléiade / Lafuma / Sellier numbers. For Pléiade, see Pascal, *Oeuvres complètes*, 2 vols. (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2000), vol. 2; for Lafuma, see Pascal, *Pensées*, trans. A.J. Krailsheimer, rev. ed. (New York: Penguin, 1995); for Sellier, see Pascal, *Pensées*, ed. and trans. Roger Ariew (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2005). For self-knowledge and self-deception, see Paul Breines and Margaret Miles in this volume. André Suarès was a Pascal scholar. See Suarès, *Visite à Pascal* (Paris: Revue des deux mondes, 1900); Suarès, *Puissances de Pascal* (Paris: E. Paul, 1923).

22 For various accounts of the origins of the name, see Russell T. Clement, *Les Fauves: A Sourcebook* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994) xi-xiii.

23 For a plot summary, see Mary Louise Roberts in this volume.

24 Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 218-219.

25 Léon Bloy, entry for 31 October 1905; in Bloy, *L'Invendable, pour faire suite au "Mendiant ingrat," à "Mon journal" et à "Quatre ans de captivité à Cochons-sur-Marne," 1904-1907* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1909) 132; in Dyrness 43.

26 Bloy's diaries were his primary means of literary expression, making him someone who never had an unpublished thought and (to use an anachronism) was perhaps the most prolific blogger of his day. Volumes published with the Mercure de France between 1892 and 1915 included *Mendiant Ingrat*, *Quatre ans de captivité à Cochons-sur-Marne*, *L'Invendable*, *Vieux de la Montagne*, *Pèlerin de l'Absolu*, and *Au Seuil de l'Apocalypse (1913-1915)*.

27 Guillaume Apollinaire, "Les 'Albums' de Georges Rouault," *Paris-Journal* (5 July 1914); qtd. in Dorival and Rouault, *l'Œuvre peint* 1:209.

28 David Nash, *Georges Rouault: Judges, Clowns and Whores* (New York: Mitchell-Innes & Nash, 2007) 51.

29 *Daumier: L'écriture du lithographe [Catalogue de l'exposition présentée à la bibliothèque nationale de France, site Richelieu, du 4 mars au 8 juin 2008]* (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, 2008) 73. See also discussion in Schloesser, "1871-1901: Realism, Symbolism, Mystic Modernism," in this volume.

30 For Rouault's tragic view of Troy, see the discussion below of *Sunt lacrymae rerum* in Schloesser, "Notes on the *Miserere* plates exhibited in *Mystic Masque*," in this volume.

31 Natasha Grigorian, "The Writings of J.-K. Huysmans and Gustave Moreau's Painting: Affinity or Divergence?," *Nineteenth-Century French Studies* 32/3-4 (Spring-Summer 2004): 282-297, see p. 286. For Baudelaire, see 285 and 296n4. For more on Baudelaire's concepts of spleen and ideal, see Soo Kang in this volume.

32 Euripides, *Iphigenia in Aulis*, trans. Nicholas Rudall (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1997) 51, 52 (lines 1166-1170, 1199-1206). For more, see Bettany Hughes, "Helen the Whore and the Curse of Beauty," *History Today* 55/11 (November 2005): 37-39; and Hughes, *Helen of Troy: Goddess, Princess, Whore* (New York: Knopf, 2005).

33 James Harding, *Folies de Paris: The Rise and Fall of French Operetta* (New York: Chappell, 1979) 46-47, and "From Helen of Troy to native bitch," 57-67.

34 "Just before Christmas 1864, La Belle Hélène, Offenbach's operatta about Helen of Troy, sex and impending war, opened at the Théâtre des Variétés in Paris. Offenbach had turned the myth of Helen, her elopement with Paris and the build-up to the Trojan conflict into an erotic satire on a hedonistic society oblivious to the fallout from its own actions. In the title role he cast a woman called Hortense Schneider. A great beauty and something of a grande horizontale, she was as famous for her raunchy delivery on stage as for the succession of lovers she took off it; the men in her life included the Prince of Wales, the future Edward VII." Tim Ashley, "She'll Always Have Paris. Sexual icon, dark temptress or a smutty comedienne? Helen of Troy has fascinated writers and composers for centuries," *The Guardian* (7 April 2006); http://arts.guardian.co.uk/filmandmusic/story/0,,1748098,00.html. Accessed 25 May 2008.

35 Heather Hadlock, "Return of the Repressed: The prima donna from Hoffmann's 'Tales' to Offenbach's 'Contes'," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 6/3 (Nov. 1994): 221-243; see esp. 230-236. Hadlock underscores the widespread fame of Schneider: "The existence of this biography [Marcel Rouff and Therese Casevitz, *La*

Vie du Fête du Second Empire: Hortense Schneider (Paris, 1930)] is one mark of Schneider's importance in the op*érette-bouffe*; another is Émile Zola's hugely successful novel *Nana* (1880), whose anti-heroine, a comic opera diva and courtesan, has a career and physical appearance clearly modeled on Schneider. The connections have led Offenbach's biographers to confuse the real woman and the fictional one . . . ." Hadlock 232-233n22.

36 Barbara Wright, "Introduction" to Alfred Jarry, *The Supermale*, trans. Ralph Gladstone and Barbara Wright (1964, 1977; Cambridge, MA: Exact Change, 1999) v-xiv, at xiii.

37 Jarry, *Supermale* 109.

38 Jarry, *Supermale* 130.

39 Compare the wash drawing entitled *La bête Kulture* (1918), grouped under the category "bestiary" in the catalogue raisonné: OP 769. A bird with a long beak wears wire-rimmed glasses and reads words on paper. As the adjective "bête" carries several meanings—stupid, dim-witted, inane, brute, beast—the title modifies the German *Kultur* as both inane and bestial.

40 Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 87-88, 358n17.

41 Mark 10: 14. *The Holy Bible containing the Old and New Testaments with the Apocryphal / Deuterocanonical Books. New Revised Standard Version* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1989). Hereafter NRSV. For a non-ironic usage of this line (perhaps as old-age reparation?), see *"Laissez venir à moi les petits enfants"* (1946-48, OP 2354).

42 See Jean-Marie Tézé in this volume.

43 Catalogue raisonné numbers in order of citation here: OP 45; 7; 9; 10; 8; 20; 22; 27; 29; 36; 38; 30; 40; 43; 44; 47.

44 *Christ couronné d'épines* (1898-1900) OP 32. The photo here has been supplied by the Fondation Rouault. Unfortunately, the archives offer no further information about this piece. I am grateful to Gilles Rouault for this research.

45 Reference is to Sigmund Freud, *Trauer und Melancholie* (1917); see Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 12, 332n45.

46 For Art Deco's "primitive" sources for iconography—in ancient Egypt, archaism, ancient Mexico, Asia, Africa, and nationalist traditions—see *Art Deco 1910-1939*, eds. Charlotte Benton, Tim Benton, and Ghislaine Wood (Boston and New York: Bulfinch Press, 2003) 40-99. See also Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 12.

47 *La Sainte Face* (1904) OP 382. Catalogue raisonné note: "Première Sainte Face connue" (First known Holy Face).

48 OP 383.

49 "The Bruges exhibition of 1902, in the sixth centenary year of the Battle of Courtrai, was but the first of a series of exhibitions of the art of the period. A Paris exhibition of 'French' art of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was held in 1904. Another exhibition of Flemish art was held at Bruges in 1905 at the Gruuthuse Mansion, and in the same year similar exhibitions were held at Brussels and Liège, at Bruges and Saint-Trond in 1907 . . . ." Edward Peters and Walter P. Simons, "The New Huizinga and the Old Middle Ages," *Speculum* 74/3 (July 1999): 587-620, see p. 598. See also Virginia Reinburg in this volume.

50 Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 40-43.

51 See Nora Possenti and Virginia Reinburg in this volume.

52 For Rouault's anger over the removal of crucifixes from Republican venues (including courtrooms), see the *Miserere* plate *...sous un croix oublié-là* **(no. 27x)**.

53 See Jean-Marie Tézé in this volume.

54 For more on Rouault's prostitutes, see discussion below of *Fille (Femme aux Cheveux Roux)* (1908, **no. 10**) and also Mary Louise Roberts in this volume.

55 Both French and English in Dorival and Rouault, *l'Œuvre peint* 1:40.

56 Jonathan P. Ribner, *Broken Tablets: The Cult of the Law in French Art from David to Delacroix* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1993).

57 Pascal, *Pensées* Pléiade 41/Lafuma 44/Sellier 78. I am grateful to my colleague Mark O'Connor for directing me to this passage.

58 Georges Rouault interview with Jean Guenne, *Les Nouvelles Littéraires* (15 November 1924); reprinted in Hergott, *Forme, couleur, harmonie* 33-36, see p. 36; translation by Bernard Doering.

59 Bloy, *L'Invendable*, 288; qtd. in *Jazz Age Catholicism* 219. For Jacques Maritain's use of "manly," see Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 158-160. See also Christopher E. Forth, *The Dreyfus Affair and the Crisis of French Manhood* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2004); and Robert Nye, *Masculinity and Male Codes of Honor in Modern France* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1993).

60 Bloy, *L'Invendable*, 289-290; qtd. in Dyrness, 43; cf. Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 219.

61 Nash 51.

62 See also Mary Louise Roberts in this volume.

63 Maritain, "Chronique de la Quinzaine: Georges Rouault," *La Revue universelle* (15 May 1924): 508; qtd. in Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 238.

64 Pascal, *Pensées* Pléiade105/Lafuma 114/Sellier 146.

65 Pascal, *Pensées* Pléiade638/Lafuma 759/Sellier 628; Pléiade113/Lafuma 122/Sellier 155. Emphasis added.

66 Georges Rouault, "Enquête sur l'art d'aoujourd'hui. Réponse à une enquête de Christian Zervos," *Les Cahiers d'art* 1-4 (1925); in Hergott, *Forme, couleur, harmonie* 39-43, see p. 40. Translation by Bernard Doering.

67 Pascal, *Pensées* Pléiade 572/ Lafuma 678/ Sellier 557.

68 Rouault, "Enquête," Hergott, *Forme, couleur, harmonie* 40; trans. Doering.

69 Georges Rouault, "Propos d'artistes," *Comoedia*, responses collated by Fels (1926); in Hergott, *Forme, couleur, harmonie* 45-46, see p. 46. Translation by Bernard Doering.

70 See Paul Breines in this volume.

71 Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 72-73, 79, 152-153, 201, 202-203.

72 George and Nouaille-Rouault, *Rouault's Universe* 66.

73 Hergott, *Forme, couleur, harmonie* 244.

74 Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 220.

75 For the Head of Christ see OP p. 344, no. 21. Others listed on p. 346. For other illustrated examples see *Baigneuses* (Jane Voohees Zimmerli Art Museum, Rutgers) and *Plaise à la cour* (Musée du Petit Palais, 1911); in *Rouault: première période, 1903-1920*, ed. Fabrice Hergott (Paris: Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, 1992) 49, 51.

76 Romans 6.3 NRSV

77 See Thomas Epstein in this volume.

78 André Suarès, *Trois Hommes. Pascal, Ibsen, Dostoïevski* (Paris: Éditions de la Nouvelle Revue Française) 363. Suarès signs the Dostoevsky section as having been completed in 1910.

79 Rouault to Suarès (16 July 1911); in Rouault and Suarès, *Correspondance* 3.

80 Clement, *Les Fauves* 242-243.

81 Rouault to Suarès (22 June 1912); in Rouault and Suarès, *Correspondance* 18. Emphasis is Rouault's.

82 Rouault to Suarès (22 June 1912); in Rouault and Suarès, *Correspondance* 20. Emphasis is Rouault's.

83 In a poem marked No. 9, Rouault wrote these lines: "*Forçats! / Sommes nous pas tous forçats. / Mais nous nous croyons rois*." Since poem No. 8 was published in nearly identical form by Guillaume Apollinaire in the July-August 1914 issue of *Les Soirées de Paris*, it would seem that the word "*Forçats!*" can be dated at least by July 1914 if not before. I am deeply grateful to Gilles Rouault for providing this information from the *Miserere* 1912 notebook conserved in the Rouault archives.

84 Rouault to Suarès (16 July 1911); in Rouault and Suarès, *Correspondance* 3-4.

85 Rouault to Suarès (11 June 1913); in Rouault and Suarès, *Correspondance* 54-55. See Suarès, *Trois hommes (Pascal-Ibsen-Dostoievski)* (Paris: Nouvelle Revue Française, 1913).

86 Voltaire, *Lettres Philosophiques*, 25; in Victor Brombert, "Pascal's Happy Dungeon," *Yale French Studies* 38 (1967): 230-242, see p. 230.

87 Brombert 231.

88 OP 518-534.

89 Rouault to Suarès (22 June 1912); in Rouault and Suarès, *Correspondance* 18.

90 See Suzanne M. Singletary, "Jacob Wrestling with the Angel: A Theme in Symbolist Art," *Nineteenth-Century French Studies* 32/3-4 (Spring-Summer 2004): 298-315.

91 For the genealogy of this pose, see Naomi Blumberg in this volume.

92 See Eugène Delacroix journal entry for January 1, 1861, regarding his work on the Saint-Sulpice mural of Jacob wrestling with the angel: "Painting, it's true, like the most exacting of mistresses, harasses and torments me in a hundred ways. For the last four months I have been getting up at dawn, and hurrying off to this enchanting work as though I were rushing to throw myself at the feet of a beloved mistress. What seemed so easy at a distance, has now become dreadfully and unceasingly difficult. But how is it that the unending struggle [*ce combat éternel*] revives instead of destroying me and occupies my mind when I leave it? A blessed compensation for all that has gone with my youth!" *The Journal of Eugene Delacroix*, ed. Hubert Wellington, trans. Lucy Norton (1951; London: Phaidon Press Ltd., 1995) 438. For Delacroix's murals at Saint-Sulpice, see Jean-Paul Kauffmann, *The Struggle with the Angel: Delacroix, Jacob, and the God of Good and Evil*, trans. Patricia Clancy (New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 2002); and Jack Spector, *The Murals of Eugene Delacroix at Saint Sulpice* (University Park: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1985).

93 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, trans. Thomas Common (New York: The Modern Library, 1900) 6-7.

94 Louis Mairet, letter of 29 December 1916; qtd. in Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1989) 215-216; in Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 10.

95 OP 685-687.

96 On this "sixteen-year obsession," see Marie Garraut in this volume.

97 Vollard's first professional encounter with Ubu had been fifteen years earlier when he published Jarry's *L'Almanach du père Ubu* [Almanach of Father Ubu, 1901] with illustrations by Pierre Bonnard. The *Almanach* followed Jarry's Ubu trilogy of plays: *Ubu Roi* (or *Ubu Rex* (Ubu King, 1896), *Ubu Cuckolded*

(ca. 1898), and *Ubu Enchained* (completed September 1899). After Jarry died tragically young at the age of 34 in 1907, his inheritors sold Vollard the rights to use the name "Ubu." In 1916, Vollard was in the process of preparing *Le Père Ubu à l'hôpital* (1918), *Le Père Ubu à l'aviation* (1918), and *La Politique coloniale du père Ubu* (1919). For more on Ubu see Jody Blake, Marie Garraut, and John Michalczyk in this volume.

98 They can be seen side-by-side (listed as being in the Pierre Matisse Gallery) in James Thrall Soby, *Georges Rouault: Paintings and Prints* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1945) 72. The New York Metropolitan entry reads: "*Portrait of a German Officer* (1916). Gouache on paper; H. 30, W. 23 inches (76.2 x 58.4 cm.). Bequest of Florence M. Schoenborn, 1995 (1996.403.18ab)." For catalogue raisonné see *Von X*, OP 679 (recto) and *Le Palais d'Ubu Roi II*, OP 1049 (verso).

99 Unpublished letter of Rouault to Vollard (21 June 1918); qtd. by Anne Montfort, "Les Grotesques, Illustrations pour le Père Ubu," in the exhibition guide to *Rouault-Matisse correspondances: 27 octobre 2006-11 février 2007*, Musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris, n.p.

100 Montfort, n.p.

101 Hergott, *Forme, couleur, harmonie* 246.

102 Geneviève Nevejan, "Maurice Girardin. Un collectionneur de son temps," *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire* 50 (April-June 1996): 143-150.

103 Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 85-85. For Huysmans, Huizinga, and the "Flemish Primitives," see Virginia Reinburg in this volume.

104 G[aston] Varenne, *Bonsoir* (16 November 1920): n.p.; qtd. in Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 231.

Georges Rouault: Action Painter[1]

Jean-Marie Tézé, S.J.

Georges Rouault's paintings are easily recognized by their themes: clowns, judges and *Saintes Faces* (Holy Faces). His style is equally obvious: thick paint, precious materials, sumptuous colors. Before he had entered the École des Beaux-Arts, this son of an artisan and an artisan himself began painting on glass and ceramic. From the very beginning, then, he developed his craft in confrontation with material. "I believe that I have matter, true matter," he once wrote to his friend, André Suarès. "I dare you to tell me what it is made of."

Rouault the artisan was not a theorist. Without a preconceived plan, he created as he went along, making his discoveries in the process of painting and repainting, laying layer upon layer until he achieved just the right hue (*le ton juste*).[2] Matisse, with whom Rouault had studied in Gustave Moreau's atelier, worked much differently, searching for the intensity of colors by setting them against or beside one another. Once he had filled up a canvas, Matisse quickly took up the motif on a fresh one for fear of too much thickness. By contrast, Rouault doggedly stuck with a painting in order to achieve, by a process of sedimentation, a material density and richness. He labored on his *impasto* just as fire works on clay and enamel, and he spoke of "burning lava and interior fire that simmered" in his paintings. In so doing, he brought to his canvasses a new material color, which the critic Lionello Venturi called "phosphorescence."

It was not without labor or development that Rouault found the material for which he was searching. After the death in 1898 of his master, Moreau, Rouault abruptly changed his themes and style. He abandoned the religious scenes that he had earlier enjoyed painting and broached strikingly different themes: prostitutes, dancers, clowns. At the same time, he freed himself from the academic forms and chiaroscuro that he had been taught. Even more surprisingly, he did the opposite of what would become his mature style, painting without thickness and with the lightest of media: watercolors, gouache, and pastels on artboard. Thus totally freed, he flung out [*jette*] forms and colors with a vehement spontaneity and an instinctive rapidity.

"*Le dessin est un jet*" [The sketch is a spurt], said Rouault. For him, the lines, the strokes, and the touches were not so much the delineation of things as they were the aftershock [*vestige*] of an event seizing his body—the traces of a physical gesture [*la trace d'un geste*] born of a strong psychic event that deployed space without consciously constructing it. No more shadows, no shadings, no more distance between foregrounds and backgrounds; rather, he laid out patches of color without restraint, applied brush strokes with great pressure—and flung out [*jetés*], like "whiplashes" or "saber slashes," lively, flowing, rapid, scalding strokes.

Faithful to Cézanne's dictum—"contour escapes me"—Rouault no longer bound his forms within contours. He left them open-ended for the sake of the design, or rather, for the sake of a kinetic script pursuing his impulsion. In *À Tabarin* (or: *Le Chahut* [The Uproar, 1905[3]]), a watercolor refinished with pastels representing a ballerina, the dazzling strokes from the painter's hand dance and twirl like the dancer herself, flinging themselves up like a French Cancan's leg. What a release of energy and what vivacity of writing![4] At the dawn of the twentieth century and without ceasing to be figurative, Rouault debuted, fifty years in advance, the painters of "action painting," "abstract expressionism," and the "Lyrical Takeoff."[5]

Parade

An art of explosion, Rouault's initial post-1902 style shatters all efforts at containment that would limit the overflowing of emotion. This is an aesthetic of the scream:[6] the liberation of lines and colors bears testimony to an explosion of feeling. In a painting entitled *Parade* (ca. 1907-1910, **fig. 1)**, Rouault, scrambling the contours, unchains a cyclone of colors that spits out fire. Everything comes apart, unleashed in an uncontrollable hilarity and in the good-humored exultation of a delirious fanfare. To the right one sees the figure of a clown: the details of the face—eye, nose and mouth—are deformed by an enormous overly prominent jaw. The principal lines meet and concentrate in a cluster of forces around the ear—a visually thunderous fanfare—as if the painter wanted to compete with as well as resonate with the music.

The bright reds shift and mix together in the play of the light. One could say that all is disorder, yet it is a visible disorder that both veils and unveils an interior world where the imagination rules and gives joy to the heart. The images well up without constraint amid circling whirls and pantomimes, crashing cymbals and thundering drums. It would be wrong to see in this painting nothing but the representation of a circus spectacle.

It is rather the expression of an indescribable laughter, which Rouault undoubtedly experienced as a child. "The first vision of a child," writes Georges Bernanos, "is so full and so pure that, at first, it is impossible to distinguish between the universe he has just taken and his own quivering joy."[7]

Christ Mocked

In 1905, in the style he practiced at that time, where the pictorial signs did not match the forms, Rouault painted *Christ aux outrages* **(no. 6)**, an example of the genre he would later come to call a *Sainte Face* (Holy Face).[8] The dark blue strokes, executed rapidly and deliberately, alter, lacerate, and ransack the face's features, cruelly marking the traces of physical aggression. At the same time, areas of lighter color—without force, without form, random and laid down like stains left by flowing liquid—give the impression of wounds.

Fig. 1. Georges Rouault, *Parade*, ca. 1907-10, Watercolor, oil, ink, and paste on canvas, 23 3/5 x 39 1/3 in., Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris. AM 3652P. Photo: Jean-Marie Tézé

Rouault has no pretensions of representing a scene

from the Passion. Rather, in his gestural manner, he seeks to depict actively and quasi-physically the lash marks inflicted by the torturers and the flowing blood of the victim. Certainly, the subject of this work is Christ. But its motif is not so much Christ as the effects and the traces of the violence inflicted upon him. So unexpected an image cannot help but attract our interest. One can certainly see in it Rouault's rejection of everything he had learned from going to museums and at the school of his master, Gustave Moreau. One can also see a strong reaction to the pale and false religiosity of "Saint-Sulpician Art."[9]

Nevertheless, when one recalls his first religious works, such as *Christ Mourned by the Holy Women* (1895-1897) or *Christ and the Disciples at Emmaus* (1899), one must ask: what interior earthquake, what rage, what revolt laid hold of him so that, without any external model and without gradual evolution, he suddenly came to produce such an eruptive and moving face of God? Whatever one might say of its origin, and whatever interpretation one might wish to give, this violent image obliges us not to separate the violence of humanity from the blood of Christ.[10]

Translated from the French by
Paul Fitzgerald, S.J.

Endnotes

1 Ed. note: The original title of this essay, "Georges Rouault Peintre Gestuel," connotes an American parallel: "Jackson Pollock Action Painter." *Peintre gestuel* plays on *la peinture gestuelle*, the French equivalent for "action painting" (the term "*gestuel*" emphasizing the physical act of painting). I am thankful to Anne Bernard Kearney for her generous assistance with interpreting the original French text of this essay.

An easily accessible overview of *la peinture gestuelle* summarizes the aim of the movement: "The pure gesture wishes to be the expression of the original being, authentic, primordial. It is a dynamic tracing of vital energy. It has no pretension to the beautiful but rather aspires to purity, to truth." ["Le geste pur se veut l'expression de l'être originel, authentique, primordial. Il est un tracé dynamique d'énergie vitale. Il n'a aucune prétention à la beauté mais aspire à la pureté, à la vérité."] See "La Peinture gestuelle," http://www.ac-orleans-tours.fr/ia28/pedagogie/arts/geste_ecriture/Presentation.htm. Accessed 6 April 2008. For parallel usages, see the exhibition catalogue *Hôtel Drouot. Salle N°14. Marc Flament, Une Peinture gestuelle 15/10/1990* (Paris: Mes Millon et Robert, 1990); and Carolle Gagnon, "Peinture gestuelle et modélisation sémiotique," Ph.D. Diss., Université Laval, 1989.

On the "gestural" in postwar American Abstract Expressionism, see Jonathan Harris, "Modernism and Culture in the USA, 1930-1960," *Modernism in Dispute. Art since the Forties,* eds. Francis Frascina, Jonathan Harris, Charles Harrison, Paul Wood (New Haven: Yale University Press in association with the Open University, 1993) 3-76, see pp. 47-48.

2 Ed. note: on Rouault's characteristic method of continually reworking "works-in-progress," see the essays of Naomi Blumberg and Stephan Dahme in the present volume.

3 Bernard Dorival and Isabelle Rouault, *Rouault: oeuvre peint*, 2 vols. (Monte Carlo: Éditions André Sauret, 1988) fig. 129.

4 Ed. note: *d'écriture* ("of writing") evokes the roots of action painting in the surrealists' practice of "automatic writing" (*écriture automatique*). This "unconscious writing" or "writing of the unconscious" emphasized the unconscious as a pure and unfiltered poetic source.

5 Ed. note: "L'envolée lyrique" refers to the abstraction lyrique movement, sometimes considered the European counterpart of American Lyrical Abstraction. The postwar movement included Georges Mathieu (1921-present), Pierre Soulages (1919-present), René Pierre Tal-Coat (1905–1985), Raoul Ubac (1910-1985), and Wols (pseudonym of Alfred Otto Wolfgang

Schulze (1913-1951), also considered a leader of the Tachism movement). For a comparison of Rouault to Tachism see the essay by Stephan Dahme in the present volume.

6 Ed. note: "C'est une esthétique du cri" evokes Edvard Munch's *Le Cri* (The Scream).

7 Ed. note: In the works of Bernanos, "childhood" represents "most perfectly the simplicity, spontaneity and hope of the truly living being." Eithne M. O'Sharkey, review of Tahsin Yücel, *L'Imaginaire de Bernanos* (Istanbul: Éditions de la Faculté des Lettres d'Istanbul, 1969), *The Modern Language Review* 67/3 (July 1972) 657-660.

8 Ed. note: for the "Holy Face," see essay by Nora Possenti Ghiglia in present volume.

9 Ed. note: "Saint Sulpician Art" (*l'art sulpicien*) refers to the mass-produced religious goods sold in the quarter surround church of Saint-Sulpice in Paris. See Stephen Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism: Mystic Modernism in Postwar Paris, 1919-1933* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 2005) 44, 196, 231, 234, 235.

10 Ed. note: for further reflections on the location of Christ at the heart of human violence, see this study of the "Flemish primitive" so influential in the thought of both Joris-Karl Huysmans and Georges Rouault: Jean-Marie Tézé, *Au coeur de la violence, Jérôme Bosch: Le portement de croix de Gand* (Paris: Mame, 1998).

Rouault and the Dynamics of Self-Deception

Margaret R. Miles

"The easiest person to deceive is one's own self."
—Edward Bulwer-Lytton[1]

A major theme of Rouault's paintings is the depiction of people who simultaneously suffer self-deception and attempt to deceive others. Because the evidently needy are less able to conceal their unhappiness from themselves and others than are the wealthy, many of his subjects are marginal people; they are vulnerable due to age, war, or poverty. Whores reveal the pain of the cavalier and harsh use they suffer; yet, ironically, they must endeavor to appear young, beautiful, and desirable. Clowns and acrobats are exhausted and aging, yet they must make people laugh. Nudes are not the sensuously posed nudes of the traditional genre; they are conspicuously uncomfortable in their bodies. But Rouault's pity for the bodies that bear the strain of self-deception was not limited to the marginal and vulnerable. It extended to bourgeoisie and magistrates, whose terror of mistaken judgment is etched in their faces, visible even in their placid demeanor. In one of the central plates of the *Miserere* series, a sad-faced clown asks, *"Who does not wear a mask?"* ("Qui ne se grime pas?") **(no. 27g)**. Rouault underscores the unhappiness that *shows through* all efforts to present a happy face to the social world.

A fundamental premise of Rouault's art is his insistence on the consanguinity of body and psyche: what is real in the psyche is evident in the body. The vulnerable quivering bodies in his paintings, as well as those that masquerade belligerently, provoke in viewers both recognition of our own self-deception and deep sympathy. Rouault exposed the fragility of the masks that seek to conceal unhappiness. Bodies are helpless victims of the psyche's self-deception. Self-deception is hard on bodies. This essay will discuss several approaches to understanding the mechanics of self-deception—theological, philosophical, and neurological—returning, in conclusion to Rouault's suggestion for the dismantling of self-deception.

I.

The root cause of self-deception is the suffering caused by unhappiness. Augustine, bishop of Hippo in North Africa at the end of the fourth century, described his pre-conversion unhappiness and self-deception in particularly graphic language. His conversion involved being taken "from behind my own back, which was where I had placed myself during the time when I did not want to be observed by myself." Picturing

himself as "scratching the itching scab of concupiscence with poisoned nails," leading to "feverish swellings, abscesses, and running sores," Augustine wrote: "You [God] set me before my own face so that I could see how foul a sight I was—crooked, filthy, spotted, and ulcerous."[2] Rouault's figures display a similarly urgent physicality; bodies reveal the unhappiness lying beneath colorful clothing, entertainment, and social status.

Concern with happiness and unhappiness is a profoundly religious issue, a preoccupation that Georges Rouault shared with religious authors like Augustine. Rouault recognized that: "All my work is religious for those who know how to look at it."[3] His heavily outlined figures, formed by chiaroscuro, describe in paint what his seventeenth-century fellow countryman Blaise Pascal described in words: People "want to be happy, only want to be happy, and cannot help wanting to be happy, but they cannot achieve happiness."[4] Pascal wrote:

> There are no exceptions. However different the means they may employ, they all strive toward this goal. The reason why some go to war and some do not is the same desire in both, but interpreted in two different ways. The will never takes the least step except to that end. This is the motive of every act of every man, including those who go and hang themselves.[5]

Pascal used a stark and vivid metaphor to describe the human condition:

> Imagine a number of men in chains, all under sentence of death, some of whom are each day butchered in the sight of the others; those remaining see their own condition in that of their fellows, and looking at each other with grief and despair await their turn. This is an image of the human condition.[6]

He analyzed the dynamic of self-deception as the response to unhappiness:

> We are not satisfied with the life we have in ourselves and our own being. We want to lead an imaginary life in the eyes of others and so we try to make an impression. We strive constantly to embellish and preserve our imaginary being and neglect the real one.[7]

In the face of whirling instability and uncertainty of mind and body, people anxiously seek confirmation of their judgments and reassurance that their affections are reciprocated; in short, they endeavor to avoid recognizing that they do, in fact, live by faith.[8] For Rouault and Pascal, the recognition of unhappiness is a crucial epistemological moment. Pascal said that acknowledging unhappiness is essential to understanding that there is a fundamental flaw in human being, namely that humans have contradictory and clashing natures: "What sort of a freak then is man? How novel, how monstrous, how chaotic, how paradoxical! Judge of all things, feeble earthworm, repository of truth, sink of doubt and error, glory and refuse of the universe!"[9] Distractions (*divertissements*), such as circuses, occupations, sex, and war, mask unhappiness but cannot create happiness.[10]

Even today, critics refer to Rouault's subjects as ugly.[11] This impression, however, needs to be examined. Two associated considerations must be taken into account. First, while the beauty of the world reveals its source in its creator, God (Augustine's "beauty so old and so new"), ugliness reveals an aspect of the human condition that is usually denied and masked, namely the unhappiness to which Pascal and Rouault were so sensitive. Second, twentieth-century viewers in Western media cultures are trained by myriad filmic devices and strategies to think of suffering as ugly. For example, the horror film genre, as its title suggests, depicts extreme suffering with the intention of horrifying, even nauseating, the viewer. Contemplating Rouault's "ugly" figures as figures of horror, even in his paintings of war, is a fundamental mistake. For Rouault, it is "ugliness" that best represents suffering. If ugliness evokes disgust and revulsion, however, suffering must invite compassion. Rouault brought suffering to the attention of

people who would have liked to to ignore it. He did so not to evoke revulsion, but to provoke empathy.

Pascal and Rouault, like Augustine, felt overwhelming *sympathy* for the victims suffering from unhappiness, even when it was self-inflicted.[12] The bodies of Rouault's clowns, acrobats, magistrates, and prostitutes are more truthful than the masks they wear; bodies expose "The hard task of living" ("*Le dur métier de vivre,*" 1922, **no. 27n**). Bodies reveal truths of the self of which the mind refuses awareness.

II.

In his book, *Self-Deception,* philosopher Herbert Fingarette analyzes the complex dynamics of deception in which the same person "is both the doer and the sufferer."[13] Self-deception, he insists, is an activity, "not something that 'happens' to the ego but something the ego does."[14] It works as follows: I "take account of my situation and detect a condition which is relevant to my interests, but which would gravely disrupt my mental equilibrium if my attention were to focus on it. [So I] avoid turning my attention in that direction."[15] Because self-deception is "as ordinary and familiar a kind of mental activity as one can imagine," it is woven into the deepest layers of habitual behavior.[16] Simultaneously a "peculiarly human" and "peculiarly demoralizing" illness, self-deception "turns upon the personal identity one accepts rather than the beliefs one has."[17] It is a spiritual failure, "involving spiritual cowardice and inner warfare."[18]

Fingarette proposes that alleviating self-deception involves developing consciousness. Consciousness does not come with being/having a body; it is, rather, a skill that is *learned*. The attempt to "spell out one's engagement in the world" is a method for achieving consciousness.[19] What am I most fundamentally *doing* in the world? However, my intentions, rigorously scrutinized, may still offer no trustworthy understanding of my engagement in the world. Nor do they provide a basis on which to hypothesize others' motives and actions: "a generalization from one's own case may be both logically too feeble and explanatorily too narrow in its scope to account for the full range and robustness of ... human nature."[20] My intentions are only part of my engagement in the world; the discernible and foreseeable *effects* of my behavior, and the attempt to predict my behavior's effects, are also highly important. Of course, the deliberate and delicate effort of discernment is at best fragile and flawed. Yet it is a necessary exercise.

In André Gregory's play, "*My Dinner with André,*" Wallace Shawn experiences a moment of truth in which he understands the fragility of introspection and the all-importance of the "background conceptual scheme" in which introspection is placed:[21]

> I think of myself as a very decent, good person simply because I'm reasonably friendly to most of the people I happen to meet every day. I mean, I really think of myself quite smugly, and I think I'm a perfectly nice guy, so long as I somehow think of the world as consisting of, you know, just the small circle of the people I know as friends.... And I'm really quite self-satisfied. I'm happy with myself. I have no complaint about myself. But the thing is, you know, let's face it, there's a whole enormous world out there that I don't ever think about, and I certainly don't take responsibility for how I've lived in that world. I mean, if I were actually to confront the fact that I'm sort of sharing this stage with the starving person in Africa somewhere, well then I wouldn't feel so great about myself. So naturally I blot those people out of my perception. So of course I'm ignoring a whole section of the real world.[22]

Fingarette proposes that only when engagement is spelled out and *owned*, can one "lay one's self open, vulnerable, as a radically divided nature, and hope for the grace of some healing movement which is not at the moment entirely within one's personal powers to effect or even to foresee."[23] In other words, we must be willing to recognize and acknowledge that, despite our dedicated and honest efforts, we necessarily live by faith.

III.

"Images are the currency of our minds."[24]

Pascal questioned the reliability of human knowledge. He recognized that "all human knowledge is speculative and provisional."[25] Reason and emotion, he said, are forever in internal struggle and contradiction. "The heart has its reasons, of which reason knows nothing."[26] If reason and introspection are ultimately untrustworthy for knowledge of reality, what hope is there for an integrity that is based on reality? Assuming an intimate connection between bodies, emotion and truth, Rouault argues (in paint), that we must *notice* what bodies reveal.[27]

Neurologist Antonio Damasio helps to explain Rouault's insistence on the revelatory quality of bodies. Damasio argues what Rouault shows, namely the connection between body, images, and emotions. Consciousness, and especially one's sense of self, he claims, is biologically based. He maps an elaborate structure of self-emerging from a "non-conscious neural signaling," that precedes language.[28] "Feeling an emotion ... consists of having mental images arising from the neural patterns which represented the changes in body and brain that make up an emotion."[29] Emotions, in turn, generate images, which become conscious when they "are accompanied, one instant later, by a sense of self in the act of knowing."[30]

Imbedded in the complex process of consciousness is the possibility of self-deception. Images, and the emotions they convey, can be "filtered or allowed to pass, selectively inhibited or enhanced." Sometimes,

> [W]e use our minds not to discover facts but to hide them. We use part of the mind as a screen to prevent another part of it from sensing what goes on elsewhere.... One of the things the screen hides most effectively is the body, our own body."[31]

Self-deception occurs when the mind rejects those images that threaten its equilibrium. Self-knowledge, according to Damasio's analysis, involves a relaxing of the mind's prohibition of the multiple images that represent and express "the body behind the self."[32]

IV.

> We are not isolated free choosers, monarchs
> of all we survey,
> but benighted creatures sunk in a reality
> whose nature
> we are constantly and overwhelmingly
> tempted to deform by fantasy.
> —Iris Murdoch[33]

Can self-deception, generated by unhappiness, be eradicated, or at least alleviated? Pascal and Rouault propose the same solution for unhappiness. "Happiness is neither outside nor inside us: it is in God, both outside and inside us," Pascal wrote.[34] Only by seeking God can we come to know ourselves, and we can know God only through God's manifestation on earth, Jesus Christ.[35]

The development of Rouault's subjects and style suggests that he came to this same conclusion through the course of his painterly career. Critics agree that four distinct but related periods can be identified in Rouault's paintings. The first period, from 1902 to 1912, is characterized by a focus on human depravity. His palette consisted of dark colors and heavy outlining of figures.[36] His subjects include clowns and circus performers, prostitutes, nudes, and men accused in courts. Few of the paintings have explicitly religious themes. In his second period, however, the sufferings of Christ are prominent. In the third period, prostitutes and nudes disappeared, and 58 of the 224 paintings of this period have religious themes. In his final period, religious subjects occur in 47 of the 205 canvases, and "brilliant colors saturate the paintings."[37]

Critic Michael Hoog noted that in this final period, Rouault transmitted the face of Christ (from his second period) to human faces. Recognizing the importance of the human face throughout Rouault's oeuvre, Hoog observed that in this period: "The face of sinful man, which Rouault took

to give to Christ, has been given back to man by the Savior, but redeemed and appeased."[38]

However, at least as early as 1922, Rouault's printmaking had transmitted the body of Christ to his suffering human subjects. Compare, for example, *Forever scourged* (1922, **no. 27c**) and *The condemned is led away* (1922, **no. 27v**). In both, the heavily chiaroscuroed bodies, drooping heads, and helpless limp hands of Christ and the condemned man outline the extremity of their dejection.

For Pascal and Rouault, Christ is the only hope for human happiness, thus, the only antidote for self-deception. Rouault implicitly contributes a theological suggestion to an ancient and still contemporary effort to discern what condition or experience made Christ fully human. Patristic authors suggested that the decisive event was a fully human birth (Tertullian), or sharing a human death (Athanasius). More recently, British theologian David Brown has suggested that Christ's full humanity included sharing human limitations of perspective.[39] Rouault suggests that in order to be fully human Christ had to share human unhappiness and suffering. By identifying with Christ's sufferings, humans can finally offer up their own sufferings to be borne by him. Rouault's *Jesus will be in agony until the end of the world (Jésus sera en agonie jusqu'à la fin du monde)*—the title is taken from Pascal's *Pensées*[40]—(**nos. 27ii** and **63**, 1926 and post-1931) expresses Christ's solidarity with suffering humanity.

Rouault makes contemporary a belief that can be documented in the earliest literature of Christian martyrdom. The third-century African Christian martyr, Felicity, enduring a difficult childbirth in prison, was asked, "You who so suffer now, what will you do when you are flung to the beasts?" She responded, "Now I suffer what I suffer; but then another will be in me who will suffer for me, because I too am to suffer for him."[41] The ancient faith that suffering shared with Christ is suffering rendered meaningful and thus overcome is evident both in the seventeenth-century author, Blaise Pascal, and in the twentieth-century painter, Georges Rouault. Rouault proposes that suffering, self-deception, and truth are visible to the attentive and empathic eye in bodies.

Endnotes

1 Edward Bulwer-Lytton, "The Disowned," *The Complete Works*, vol. 2 (New York: Thomas A. Crowell and Co., n.d.) 189.

2 Augustine, *Confessions* VIII. 7, *The Confessions of Saint Augustine*, trans. Rex Warner (New York: Mentor-Omega, 1963) 173.

3 René Baucher, "Rouault et la peinture religieuse," *Synthèses* 56 (January 1951): 218-225, see p. 224-25.

4 "Nonobstant ces misères il veut être heureux et ne veut être qu'heureux, et ne peut ne vouloir pas l'être." Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, Fragment 134-169; in Pascal, *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Louis Lafuma (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1963) 516; Pascal, *Pensées*, trans. A. J. Krailsheimer, rev. ed. (1966; New York: Penguin Books, 1995) 37.

5 "Tous les hommes recherchent d'être heureux. Cela est sans exception, quelques différents moyens qu'ils y emploient. Ils tendent tous à ce but. Ce qui fait que les uns vont à la guerre et que les autres n'y vont pas est ce même désir qui est dans tous les deux accompagné de différentes vues. La volonté fait jamais la moindre démarche que vers cet objet. C'est le motif de toutes les actions de tous les hommes, jusqu'à ceux qui vont se pendre." Pascal, Fragment 148-425. French 519; English 45.

6 "Qu'on s'imagine un nombre d'hommes dans les chaînes, et tous condamnés à la mort, dont les uns étant chaque jour égorgés à la vue des autres, ceux qui restent voient leur propre condition dans celle de leurs semblables, et, se regardant les uns et les autres avec douleur et sans espérance, attendent à leur tour. C'est l'image de la condition des hommes." Fragment 434-199. French 556; English 137.

7 "Nous ne nous contentons pas de la vie que nous avons en nous et en notre propre être. Nous voulons vivre dans l'idée des autres d'une vie imaginaire et nous nous efforçons pour cela de paraître. Nous travaillons incessamment à embellir et conserver notre être imaginaire et négligeons le véritable." Fragment 806-147. French 602; English 244.

8 The apparent frivolity of Pascal's famous wager acknowledges the untrustworthiness of reason, the deceit practiced by the senses, the probability that many of our most cherished notions are in error. We cannot figure it out. So, he says, make the leap; wager that God exists because that is all that can save the appearances. See Pascal, Fragment 418-233.

9 "Quelle chimère est-ce donc que l'homme? quelle nouveauté, quel monstre, quel chaos, quel sujet de contradictions, quel prodige? Juge de toutes choses, imbécile ver de terre, dépositaire du vrai, cloaque d'incertitude et d'erreur, gloire et rebut de l'univers." Pascal, Fragment 131-434. French 515; English 34. Cf. Pascal, Fragment 199-72: "Car enfin qu'est-ce que l'homme dans la nature? Un néant à l'égard de l'infini, un tout à l'égard du néant, un milieu entre rien et tout, infiniment éloigné de comprendre les extrêmes; la fin des choses et leurs principes sont pour lui invinciblement cachés dans un secret impénétrable. Également—incapable de voir le néant d'où il est tiré et l'infini où il est englouti." ["For, after all, what is man in nature? A nothing compared to the infinite, a whole compared to the nothing, a middle point between all and nothing, infinitely remote from an understanding of the extremes; the end of things and their principles are unattainably hidden from him in impenetrable secrecy."] French 526; English 61.

10 See Pascal, Fragment 132-170: "Divertissement—Si l'homme était heureux il le serait d'autant plus qu'il serait moins diverti, comme les saints et Dieu. Oui; mais n'est-ce pas être heureux que de pouvoir être réjoui par le divertissement?—Non; car il vient d'ailleurs et de dehors; et ainsi il est dépendant, et partout, sujet à être troublé par mille accidents, qui font les afflictions inévitables." ["*Diversion.* If man were happy, the less he were diverted the happier he would be, like the saints and God. Yes: but is a man not happy who can find delight in diversion? No: because it comes from somewhere else, from outside; so he is dependent, and always liable to be disturbed by a thousand and one accidents, which inevitably cause distress." French 516; English 37.

11 For example, see David Nash, "Georges Rouault. A Painter's Painter," *Georges Rouault: Judges, Clowns, and Whores* (New York: Mitchell-Innes & Nash, 2007) 6. Exactly one hundred years earlier, Léon Bloy used the same language in a letter to Rouault: "you are attracted exclusively to the ugly; you seem to be enthralled by the hideous." Letter of Bloy to Rouault, 1 May 1907; in William A. Dyrness, *A Vision of Suffering and Salvation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1971) 43.

12 A little-noticed feature of Augustine's view of the sinfulness of humanity is his sympathy with sinners. After describing the structural stability of *concupiscentia* from the infant's earliest gasp/grasp for breath, through childhood efforts to acquire "footballs, nuts, and pet sparrows," to the adult's frenzied search for acquisition and self-aggrandizement, Augustine remarked, "And no one is sorry for the children; no one is sorry for the older people; no one is sorry for both of them." Augustine, *Confessions* I. 9.

13 Herbert Fingarette, *Self-Deception* (1969; Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000) 1.

14 Fingarette 129.

15 Fingarette 169.

16 Fingarette 162.
17 Fingarette 66.
18 Fingarette 138.
19 Fingarette 40, 43.
20 Paul M. Churchland and Patricia S. Churchland, *On the Contrary: Critical Essays, 1987-1997* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998) 12. "Is introspection a reliable guide to responsibility? Can introspection distinguish those internal causes for which we are responsible from those for which we are not? Probably not" 234.
21 Churchland and Churchland 7.
22 Wallace Shawn and André Gregory, *My Dinner with André* (New York: Grove Press, 1981) 83.
23 Shawn and Gregory 137.
24 Antonio R. Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1999) 318.
25 Churchland and Churchland 25.
26 "Le coeur a ses raisons, que la raison ne connaît point." Pascal, Fragment 423-277. cf. 424-278: "C'est le coeur qui sent Dieu, et non la raison. Voilà ce que c'est que la foi. Dieu sensible au coeur, non à la raison." ["It is the heart which perceives God and not the reason. That is what faith is: God perceived by the heart, not by the reason."] French 552; English 127.
27 The twentieth-century sculptor, Duane Hansen, similarly insists that bodies reveal the character and condition of people. His life-sized trompe-l'oeil sculptures of ordinary people reveal the unhappiness and limitations of most of his subjects.
28 "The language explanation of consciousness is improbable" Damasio 185.
29 Damasio 280.
30 Damasio 282.
31 Damasio 28.
32 Damasio 133.
33 Iris Murdoch, "Against Dryness," *Existentialists and Mystics: Writings on Philosophy and Literature*, eds. Peter Conradi and George Steiner (New York: Penguin, 1997) 293.
34 "Le bonheur n'est ni hors de nous ni dans nous; il est en Dieu et hors et dans nous." Pascal, Fragment 407-465. French 549; English 119. cf. Fragment 564-485.
35 Pascal, Fragment 417-548. "Non seulment nous ne conaissons Dieu que par Jésus-Christ mais nous ne nous conaissons nous-mêmes que par J.-C.; nous ne conaissons la vie, la mort que par Jésus-Christ. Hors de J.-C. nous ne savons ce que c'est ni que notre mort, ni que Dieu, ni que nous-mêmes."
36 Dyrness 89.
37 Dyrness 94.
38 Michel Hoog, "La Donation Rouault au Louvre," *Études* (September 1964): 215-219, see p. 219.
39 David Brown, *Tradition and Imagination: Revelation and Change* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1999). See Part III, especially c.6, 275ff.
40 "Jésus sera en agonie jusqu'à la fin du monde. Il ne faut pas dormir pendant ce temps-là." ["Jesus will be in agony until the end of the world. There must be no sleeping during that time."] Pascal, Fragment 919-553. French 620; English 289.
41 "The Martyrdom of Ss. Perpetua and Felicity," trans. Herbert Musurillo, S. J., *Acts of the Christian Martyrs* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972).

Tears at the Heart of Spectacular Paris: Rouault's Prostitutes

Mary Louise Roberts

Georges Rouault's desire to paint prostitutes resulted first from circumstance of place. In 1902, the painter rented an *atelier* with Albert Marquet at the Place de Clichy in the ninth arrondissement of Paris. Located just down the Boulevard from his apartment was the Moulin Rouge, and a little farther, Place Pigalle. Both were notorious gathering places for women of the night. While Rouault was too poor at the time to pay for love, he attracted several of these women into his studio by offering them the heat of his woodstove. There he called upon their services only as nude models. Beginning in this period, prostitutes became a common subject of Rouault's paintings.[1]

But Rouault's artistic preference for such women has an aesthetic as well as a circumstantial history. In 1903, Rouault took over the conservation of the Musée Gustave Moreau, after his former mentor died of cancer. Rouault was also made responsible for Moreau's library, and it was there that he discovered *La Femme Pauvre* (1897) by Léon Bloy. The novel, which concerned the young model/prostitute Clothilde, gave Rouault the means to reconceive of himself as an artist in the wake of Moreau's death. In 1904, Bloy wrote in his journal that Rouault "found at Moreau's my book *The Woman who was Poor*...This book struck his heart, wounded him incurably."[2] The two men became friends, and a year later, Rouault painted a triptych in homage to *The Woman who was Poor,* which he titled *Filles*, or "Prostitutes." While Bloy reasonably could have been flattered, he was, in fact, outraged by Rouault's images, which he called on one occasion "the most atrocious and avenging caricatures." Furthermore, in a nasty letter to Rouault, Bloy accused him of painting "always the same slut," and being "attracted exclusively to the ugly...enthralled by the hideous."[3]

Rouault and Bloy had one thing in common: they both reacted strongly to each other's portrayal of the prostitute. I would like to explore in greater detail their responses because they illuminate Rouault's own fascination with prostitutes during this transformative phase of his career. While Rouault no doubt drew on many sources in his portrayal of prostitutes—Baudelaire, Goncourt, and Huysmans are three others that come to mind—the influence of Bloy seems particularly significant. While the aesthetic similarities between Bloy's and Rouault's prostitutes are revealing, even more so are the differences between them. Bloy's Clothilde evokes the specter of poverty and its attendant immoralities; she follows a traditional Christian narrative of sin and redemption. Although Clothilde succumbs to moral depravity by losing her virginity and accepting work as a nude model, she ultimately overcomes her sinful past by transcending flesh altogether, and emerging as a mendicant saint.

By contrast, Rouault's prostitutes elide moral judgment. Like Bloy, Rouault paints his prostitutes in the unbecoming light of reality, but unlike Bloy, he does not judge them morally. Rouault's figures gain their ugliness not as an effect of moral judgment, but from their defiant shame at being judged. While Bloy exercises judgment upon Clothilde, Rouault materializes in his *filles* the cruelty of judgment itself. As Stephen Schloesser has argued, Rouault's vision can be most succinctly captured by a line from Virgil he used several times: "There are tears (of grief) at the very heart of things."[4] Rouault came to paint prostitutes again and again because, he believed, they offered a glimpse of the tears at the heart of a new Paris—one increasingly distracted by spectacle and visual pleasures.

To better understand the kinship between Bloy and Rouault's artistic vision of the prostitute, let us begin with a closer examination of Clothilde in *The Woman Who Was Poor*. Bloy wrote the novel only two years after his prostitute-mistress, Berthe Dumont, died. Critics consider the character of Clothilde to be modeled after Dumont.[5] But as an image, Clothilde also traces her lineage to *la femme pauvre* who so preoccupied social theorists and political economists at mid-century. In his classic 1836 inquiry on prostitution, Parent-Duchâtelet established a link between *la femme pauvre* and prostitution. All poor women were at least potential prostitutes, argued Parent-Duchâtelet, because they dwelt in a marginal, unregulated world where social, economic, and moral order was consistently frustrated.[6] Although Parent-Duchâtelet fancied himself as a social scientist, his work was not without moral judgment. He maintained, for example, that at least some working-class women had an innate tendency for laziness and vanity. For this reason, they chose to make their living on their backs and before their mirrors.

Bloy drew heavily on such prejudices in constructing the characters of Clothilde and her mother. Prostitution, he once argued, "is the unavoidable destiny of the poor woman when Providence fails to give her a miracle."[7] Clothilde is forced into nude modeling (for Bloy, a form of prostitution) in order to make ends meet. Like *la femme pauvre* of the novel's title, Clothilde represents the social disorder of urban, industrial Paris. Indeed, she becomes a symbol of the pathology

Fig. 1. Georges Rouault, *Fille* (Girl), 1906. Watercolor and pastel on paper, 28 x 21 3/5 in. © Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris / Roger-Viollet

Fig. 2. Georges Rouault, *Filles* (Girls), 1905. Pastel, crayon and watercolor on paper mounted on cardboard, 9 x 9 1/4 in. Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France, AM1991-305. Photo: Adam Rzepka. CNAC/MNAM/Dist. Réunion des Musées Nationaux / Art Resource, NY

of industrial capitalism.[8] But while Bloy makes Clothilde a simple victim of poverty, he portrays her mother, Madame Maréchale, as an agent of her own demise. A destitute woman who has prostituted herself and is presently shacking up with a despicable man, Madame Maréchale is hopelessly vain and fancies herself a lady. She is attracted to every form of debauchery, including deception and theft as well as the sale of her own and her daughter's body. In her vanity, laziness, and corruption, she perfectly conveys the moral condemnation implicit in Parent-Duchâtelet's theories of prostitution. Bloy's characterization of Madame Maréchale demonstrates that the naturalized links between poverty, prostitution and immorality, established by Parent-Duchâtelet in 1836, clearly remained strong in the collective imagination at the dawn of the twentieth century.[9]

What attracted Rouault to Clothilde when he read *La Femme Pauvre* in 1903? Like Bloy, Rouault had one eye in the gutter and another in the heavens. For this reason, he was attracted to Clothilde as a character. She evoked both a realist's vision of poverty, and a symbolist's vision of mystery and faith. At the time, Rouault was searching for a way to reconcile the symbolist approach to painting that he had learned from Moreau with the "concrete, realist, working-class milieu of his childhood."[10] Bloy's novel helped him to do so. Clothilde was *une pauvre femme,* but at the same time, so much more. On the one hand, Clothilde was like any desperately poor woman on the edge of starvation, forced to sell herself. When the artist Gacougnol discovers her crying, unable to undress in order to model for him, he views her as "pathetic," "nothing more than a pitiful loving piece of flesh…adorned only by the palest flowers of Poverty."[11] At the same time, however, Clothilde transcends her *misère,* becoming an idealized symbol of human striving. The philosopher Jacques Maritain once said of Bloy that he needed to transform "every event, every gesture, every individual into the pure symbol of some consuming spiritual reality."[12] Again, when Gacougnol views Clothilde in his studio, he also notices: "The paradoxical magnificence of her disordered hair, the somber velvet of her antelope eyes with their shipwrecked lights, and the profoundly Christian face washed over by the hot shower of tears—all this created the impression of a dream."[13]

In Clothilde, then, Bloy created a character who was much more than she first seemed to be. While at first glance, she looked to be nothing more than a gutter rat; in fact her rags disguised a noble intelligence. The opposite could be said of the novel's couple, the Poulots, who lived in the same smug bourgeois neighborhood as Clothilde and her husband. Bloy detested bourgeois hypocrisy, and portrayed these neighbors as morally corrupt in the worst way. While at first the Poulots appear proper and cordial, they eventually reveal their wicked hearts. Their facade of propriety hides their despicable souls. In their utter self-deception and malicious intent, they make the couple's life a living hell. If Clothilde was much more than she first appeared to be, the Poulets were much, much less than was initially evident. This play on the deceptiveness of appearance must have fascinated Rouault, since in his homage to *The Woman Who Was Poor,* presented at the Salon d'Automne of 1905, he portrayed the Poulots juxtaposed to an image of a prostitute, perhaps Clothilde.[14] Paradoxically, then, the prostitutes became the protagonists of Rouault's triptych, the Poulots, their evil foils.

Like Bloy, Rouault disdained social masks: "Who wears no disguise"?[15] Just as bourgeois "respectability" could harbor great evil, so could depravity conceal the sublime. Like Bloy again, Rouault was drawn to the soulful underneath. In a letter to Edouard Schuré in 1905, he wrote about an old clown he saw sitting on a wagon and mending his costume. Mostly he noticed:

> …the contrast between brilliant, sparkling things made for amusement and the infinite sadness of life, if one looks at it more impartially. Then I began to develop this fact. I realized that the "clown" was myself, it was all of us, or nearly all. It is life itself which gives us this rich and sequined costume, we are all clowns to a certain extent, we all wear sequined costumes, but if someone catches us unawares, as I did when I surprised the old clown, oh! who

Fig. 3. Georges Rouault, *Prostitute at the Mirror*, 1906. Watercolor on cardboard. 27 1/2 x 21 4/5 in. Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France, AM1795D. CNAC/MNAM/Dist. Réunion des Musées Nationaux / Art Resource, NY. Photo: Philippe Migeat

> would dare admit that he is not touched to his very depths by immeasurable pity. I have the failing (if it is a failing; in any case, it is for me a source of enormous suffering) never to leave anyone in their sequined costume, even if he is king or emperor. What I want to see in the man standing before me is his soul, and the greater the person, the more exalted his position, the more I fear for his soul." [16]

Although Rouault refers to clowns here, many of these ideas engage his fascination with prostitutes.[17] Like clowns, *filles* wore "brilliant, sparkling things made for amusement." Like clowns again, prostitutes were entertainers forced to pretend to be joyful and happy. Somewhat guiltily, Rouault confesses his desire "never to leave anyone in their sequined costume." Like the prostitute himself, he defines his "failing" in terms of disrobing. The role of the artist, like the job of *la fille,* was to disrobe, to strip bare—to reveal oneself and others as naked.

Once their brilliant, sparkling things are removed, these women display mature and well-proportioned bodies (*Fille*, **fig. 1**; *Filles*, **fig. 2**). They seem to lack the *pudeur* (modesty) of girls, despite their status as *filles;* their bodies are old, used, worn before their time. Furthermore, at the same time that they stand before the painter as "professionals," these women do not sit comfortably in their bodies; they do not model naturally or easily. While their poses are traditionally seductive, they dwell in an elsewhere away from their bodies; their facial expressions are anything but seductive. They turn away from the painter's gaze, looking humiliated, gruff, and strangely distant from the sex their bodies so blatantly present. In *Prostitute at Her Mirror*, for example (**fig. 3**), the woman's face, reflected in the glass, seems a world apart from the profile of her body. If the latter is passive, almost serene, the woman's face is twisted in an anger that seems to cover shame. In Rouault's prostitutes, Bernard Dorival has observed "the humiliation of those who can find refuge only in defiance, while those mask-like grimaces, misshapen mouths, enormous noses and the dark cavity of their sunken eyes reflect the disarray of their being."[18]

Contemporaries deemed these "gutter Venuses" to be the foulest of creatures. In his claim that Rouault was drawn to the ugly and the hideous, Bloy was certainly not alone. Other critics described the prostitutes as crouching "in poses assumed by epileptic toads." They had "fat bellies adorned with brushwood instead of soft hair," and had been left "to marinate in vinegar, in acid, in order to make [them] dry up like a stick, or swell like a bladder."[19] Unlike the prostitutes of Toulouse-Lautrec (e.g., Jane Avril, Yvette Guibert, la Goulue), these women lack individuality; they follow a general template which was considered monstrous, pitiful "paste made of caviar, blacking, and pitch."[20] *Le Petit Parisien* concluded that in these prostitutes, Rouault had "raised deformity to the level of dogma."[21] Jacques Maritain read such hideousness as a result of moral judgment on the artist's part: "this monstrous and miserable flesh, enslaved in these hidden harmonies and these precious transparencies of the most complex matter—this is the wound of Sin, it is the sadness of fallen Nature,

penetrated by an observation without complicity and an art which does not bend."[22] Far from being an artist "without complicity" or one who "does not bend," however, Rouault, himself, dismissed the idea that his paintings of prostitutes were moral in aim. "Art is infinitely above morality," he once wrote.[23]

The quality of the "ugliness" he painted in these prostitutes expressed compassion rather than contempt. The critic Louis Vauxcelles got it right when he compared Rouault to Toulouse-Lautrec: "unlike Lautrec, when [Rouault] paints a prostitute, he does not cruelly enjoy the vice exalted by the creature. Instead he suffers and cries from it."[24] Vauxcelles sensed the compassionate mood of Rouault's portraits. But even he was wrong about what the painter was grieving, which was not the prostitutes' vice. In fact, Rouault was more interested in how precisely such judgments—that these *filles* were riddled with vice—were felt by the prostitutes themselves. Vauxcelles and most other contemporary critics denied these women a positive spiritual life, in some cases, a spiritual life at all. But this was precisely what fascinated Rouault—the soul underneath the sequined costume. In the women's "ugliness," their unease in their bodies, Rouault wanted to visualize the *effects* of the moral judgments they suffered every time they walked down the street. He strove to give visual form to the spiritual damage inflicted by moral judgment. He materialized in these *filles* the sting of contempt, the erosion of self-esteem, the tears at the very heart of things. If his prostitutes were hideous, it was not because Rouault himself was judging their bodies or the lives they led. Rather it was because he was interested in portraying judgment—or misjudgment—as a spiritually mutilating force. Rouault's ugliness is the hideousness of shame.

By contrast, Bloy judged the poor as much as he depicted them. A misanthrope, Bloy "condemned the world around him *en bloc,* without distinguishing between good and evil, without giving anyone or anything a fair trial."[25] At one point in *La Femme pauvre,* he steps back from his role as narrator in order to pass judgment on the characters in his story: "In fact, these gracious readers might do even better by not opening the present volume at all, which is nothing but a long digression on the evil of living, the infernal disgrace of an existence without a snout in a society without God."[26] Bloy read Rouault's prostitutes in the same way: as a long digression on disgrace in a godless world. Bloy could not have understood how Rouault approached these women, as he had no critical distance on the act of judgment itself. Clothilde finally escapes Bloy's contemptuous eye at the end of the novel, but only when she has suffered beyond measure, renounced all bodily and earthly pleasures, and transcended the flesh altogether by becoming an ephemeral, saintly figure. For a woman, nothing

Fig. 4. Georges Rouault, *Olympia*, 1905. Watercolor and pastel on paper, 10 3/5 x 17 in. Private Collection, Paris

Fig. 5. Georges Rouault, *Odalisque*, 1907. Watercolor and pastel on paper over cardboard, 24 4/5 x 38 1/3 in. Kunstmuseum, Basel. Gift of Max Bangerter, Montreux 1966. Photo: Martin P. Buhler

Fig. 6. Edouard Manet, *Olympia,* 1863. Oil on canvas, 51 3/8 x 74 3/4 in. Musee d'Orsay, Paris. Photo: Hervé Lewandowski. Réunion des Musées Nationaux / Art Resource, NY

less than sainthood would do in order to avoid Bloy's disdain. By the end of the novel, Clothilde gains her gender but lacks her sex as well as everything else: "She has even understood, and this is not far from the sublime, that Woman only really exists if she is without bread, without shelter, without friends, without husband and without children, and that only like this can she can compel her Saviour to her side."[27]

Rouault asks for no such sacrifice. At the same time that his prostitutes did not live comfortably in their own bodies, they had dignity; their faces expressed anger rather than complete humiliation. In short, they were, as Stephen Schloesser has written, "figures whose dignity consists in the fact that they know themselves as masked and misjudged by others."[28] Like clowns again, these prostitutes know the reality of their nakedness underneath their sequined dresses. If we look at Rouault's *Prostitute at Her Mirror*, once more, we realize that how the *fille* sees herself and how we see her—these two images are at complete odds with one another. The twisted, angry face in the mirror results from the disparity between the woman's knowledge of herself, and what we know about her. Prostitutes must misrepresent themselves in order to survive, but in doing so, they pay the price of misjudgment.

Rouault's choice to portray rather than embrace moral judgment made him a more modern artist than Bloy. *The Woman Who Was Poor* seems helplessly stuck in the nineteenth century, along with the ideas concerning prostitution it extols. By contrast, Rouault had his ear tuned to the first strains of the new century, in particular, the new Paris of the Moulin Rouge and Place Pigalle where he lived and worked. Once again, we return to the circumstance of place, in this case, the Paris of spectacle and mass culture. If in creating his Clothilde, Bloy depended on the Parent-Duchâtelet image of *la femme pauvre,* Rouault drew upon a more contemporary image—the prostitute as symbol of the fin-de-siècle Paris of the boulevards.

As both "saleswoman and wares in one," to use Walter Benjamin's phrase, the prostitute inscribed in her body a growing culture of the commodity.[29] Literally as well as metaphorically, she became associated with the cafés, theaters, and department stores arising on the wide, new boulevards of Haussmann's Paris. From Zola's *Nana* to Edouard Manet's *Olympia,* the prostitute served as a projection for French anxieties concerning the growth of consumerism and public leisure, and their effect on everyday life (**fig. 6**). Manet's *Olympia* was also considered hideous, the type of woman who was increasingly moving in from the margins and usurping the center of the city. On the boulevards, she became an emblem of a Paris in which nothing was sacred and everything on sale. In 1905, Rouault painted a reclining prostitute he titled "Olympia" (**fig. 4**). This portrait and another "Odalisque" (**fig. 5**) that followed clearly reference Manet's *fille* in their pose, in their unabashed display of sex and class, and in the "dirtiness" of their skin.[30]

But a distinctive melancholy pervades Rouault's prostitutes; they lack the irony of Manet's *Olympia.* To understand why, we must return once more to Rouault's clown re-sewing the sequins on his costume. The mass cultural practices of the new Paris—strolling down the boulevards, shopping for the latest fashion, reading the newspaper gossip,

taking in a show at the Moulin Rouge—had transformed the city into a world where *seeing* and *being seen* were paramount. Such practices produced the world as an image or picture, transforming everyday life into spectacle.[31] "Morning, noon and night, summer and winter, there is always something to be seen and a large portion of the population seems absorbed in the pursuit of pleasure," boasted a *Guide to Paris* in 1884.[32] Paris had become, in Roger Shattuck's words, "a stage, a vast theater for herself and all the world."[33] Prostitutes, of course, were part of this culture of shining, sparkling things. But once again, Rouault was most interested in the juxtaposition of such glitter with the infinite sadness of life. He used his *filles* to revisit the soulful underneath, ever more ephemeral in the brilliance surrounding him. Just as Bloy's Clothilde symbolized the pathology of industrial capitalism, Rouault's *filles* signified the emptiness of commodity capitalism: the vertiginous motion of this world and what it leaves forgotten in its wake, the damage of *flânerie* as a modern form of judgment. This is not the "sadness of fallen Nature," as Maritain would have it, but the tears at the heart of spectacular Paris.

Endnotes

1 Pierre Courthion, *Georges Rouault* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc. 1962) 99.

2 Qtd. in Stephen Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism: Mystic Modernism in Postwar Paris, 1919-1933* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 2005) 217; Courthion, *Georges Rouault,* 97; Lionello Venturi, *Rouault* (Lausanne: Editions d'Art Albert Skira, 1959) 35.

3 Qtd. in Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 218-219.

4 Stephen Schloesser, "Introduction," in this volume. The translation of Virgil's line is from the essay by Bernard Doering in present volume.

5 Maurice Bardèche, *Léon Bloy* (Paris: La Table Ronde, 1989) 299.

6 Joan Scott, "L'Ouvrière! Mot impie, sordide…": Women Workers in the Discourse of French Political Economy, 1840-1860," *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1989) 143.

7 Qtd. in Bardèche, *Léon Bloy,* 298.

8 Scott, "L'Ouvrière! Mot impie."

9 For more on prostitution in the nineteenth century, see: Judith Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1980); Alain Corbin, *Les Filles de noce* (Paris: Flammaria, 1982), English trans. *Women for Hire: Sexuality in France after 1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1990); Jill Harsin, *Policing Prostitution in Nineteenth-Century Paris* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press 1985); Jan Matlock, *Scenes of Seduction: Prostitution, Hysteria, and Reading Difference in Nineteenth-Century France* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1994).

10 Schloesser, "1902-1920," in this volume.

11 Léon Bloy, *La Femme pauvre* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1897) 59.

12 Qtd. in Courthion, 98.

13 Bloy 59-60.

14 Courthion 103. As listed in the catalogue, the titles were "Filles: 1) Monsieur et Madame Poulot, Léon Bloy, La Femme Pauvre, peinture; 2) Prostitute, peinture; 3) Terpsichore, peinture."

15 Bernard Dorival and Isabelle Rouault, *Rouault: l'œuvre peint*, 2 vols. (Monte-Carlo: Éditions André Sauret, 1988) 2:32-35.

16 *Georges Rouault, forme, couleur, harmonie, catalogue* published for the Musée d'art moderne et contemporain de Strasbourg exhibition, 10 November 2006 to 18 March 2007, commissariat Fabrice Hergott (Strasbourg: Musées de Strasbourg, 2006) 22. See also Fabrice Hergott and Sarah Whitfield, *Georges Rouault: the Early Years* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1993) 27; and Courthion 86. In translating this passage, I worked with both the Courthion and the

Hergott/Whitfield translations as well as the original French.

17 Charles Baudelaire, "The Old Acrobat," *The Parisian Prowler: Le Spleen de Paris*, trans. Edward K. Kaplan (Athens, GA: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1997), 27-30. According to Rouault's daughters, this book by Baudelaire was a favorite of Rouault's, and remained by his bed for several years. In "The Old Acrobat," Baudelaire is fascinated with the contrast between the brilliance of the scene and the sadness of the acrobat: "Everywhere joy, profit, debauchery;.... Here absolute wretchedness, wretchedness rigged out, most horrible, rigged out in comic rags, where necessity, much more than art, had produced the contrast." For this connection between Rouault and Baudelaire, see the essay by Soo Yun Kang, "'Spleen and Ideal in Strife': Rouault's Baudelaire, 1918-1927," in present volume. I am grateful to Stephen Schloesser for leading me to "The Old Acrobat."

18 Dorival and Rouault 110.

19 Qtd. in Courthion 100.

20 Qtd. in Courthion 102. For more criticisms, see also 108-110. For the comparison to Lautrec, see Courthion 110.

21 Qtd. in Courthion 111.

22 Qtd. in Schloesser, "1902-1920," in this volume.

23 Qtd. in Schloesser, "1902-1920," in this volume.

24 Danielle Molinari, "Une Artiste divinement en marge," *Rouault, 1871-1958* (Paris: Galerie Taménaga, 2007) 7.

25 Venturi 32.

26 Bloy 141.

27 Bloy 392.

28 Schloesser, "1902-1920," in this volume.

29 See Walter Benjamin, "Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century," *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1969) 157. For the rise of a new commodity culture in Paris during the late nineteenth century, see Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1989); T.J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1984), Rosalind Williams, *Dream Worlds: Mass Consumption in Late Nineteenth-Century France* (Berkeley, CA: Univ. of California Press, 1982); Vanessa Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities: Early Mass Culture in Fin-de-siècle Paris* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1998).

30 For Manet's *Olympia* (1863), see Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life*, ch. 2.

31 On the growth of this kind of visual culture in the period, see Mary Louise Roberts, *Disruptive Acts* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2002), particularly Chapter 7; Patrick Brantlinger, "Mass Media and Culture in Fin-de-siècle Europe," *Fin de Siècle and its Legacy*, eds. Mikulas Teich and Roy Porter (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1990) 98-114. Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities.*

32 Qtd. in Schwartz 1.

33 Roger Shattuck, *The Banquet Years: The Origins of the Avant-garde in France, 1885 to World War I* (New York: Vintage Books, 1955) 5-7.

1908/2008: Rouault's *Whore*, Freud's Gender-bent Judge, and Unmasking as Infinite Regression

Paul Breines

In spite of the inner conflict that he experienced between his art and his Catholicism in the first decade of the twentieth century, and even after Léon Bloy's lacerating remark in May 1907 that, in his representations of (female) prostitutes, circus girls, clowns, judges, and Jesus, Rouault was "exclusively attracted to the ugly," the painter continued to create images of them. Since Bloy's verdict on Rouault's paintings might be interpreted to have been specifically Catholic, I want to note that anxiety over "the ugly" was not confined to people of his and Rouault's religious faith.

On the contrary, what today we would call the discourse of "degeneration" was, by 1900, a continental force; it had become a common sense that paid no heed to the borders between denominations, nations, races, and classes. Indeed, Bloy spoke for a European bourgeois Respectability, which, in the decades surrounding the turn of the century, perceived itself to be under mortal threat from imagined secretions of the West's rapid urbanization: the Jew, the "invert" (soon to be designated the "homosexual"), and the prostitute, each of whom appeared to be an endangering counter-type to Respectability's ideals of physical beauty, moral rectitude, productivity, and overall health.[1]

Regarding (female) prostitutes in particular, the contours of Bloy's distress had been sketched in social scientific terms in 1893 by the Positivist criminologists, Cesare Lombroso and Guglielmo Ferrero, in their influential study, *The Criminal Woman: The Prostitute and the Normal Woman*.[2] As Bloy's comments and Rouault's paintings indicate, by 1900, Europe had Respectability's prostitutes on its brain.

However, Rouault was also painting judges, exemplars of Respectability. This fact is worth underscoring because it bears on what one might see in Rouault's representations of prostitutes, specifically, on what Stephen Schloesser sees in them. If Schloesser's interpretation of Rouault's prostitutes *and* judges is viable—and it convinces me—then one notices that the artist is drawn to them not only because they constitute opposite poles of bourgeois life (the presumed-to-be Ugly and the presumed-to-be Respectable), but also because these two apparently contrasting figures in the French painter's "human comedy" actually have something fundamental in common.

Homo personatus: Un-masking as Infinite Regress

That fundamental something in question is epistemological, that is, having to do with how we can know that what we know is true, and it is linked to Rouault's quest, which was both modernist and Catholic, for self-knowledge, a quest that became extremely intense in the wake of his nervous collapse following Gustave Moreau's death in 1898. Gustave Courbet (1828-1885), who was accused (as Rouault would later be) of harboring an attraction to the ugly, famously replied in a thick positivist accent that he did not paint angels because he did not see them. Of Rouault, one could say that he painted prostitutes, not because he could see them (which, of course, he could), but because he had been moved by a life crisis toward introspection. "I saw clearly that the clown [or prostitute, or circus girl, or judge] was me...was us...almost all of us," the painter wrote to the symbolist Edouard Schuré in 1905. In his eyes, prostitutes, clowns, lawyers, and judges are striking subjects because they are so vividly typical.

Because they are required by their respective roles to don masks in especially manifest and conscious ways, such figures suggest to Schloesser's Rouault something about the human person: namely, that one is essentially a mask-wearing being, *homo personatus,*[3] essentially inessential, you could say. In their respective ways, the prostitute and the judge enable us to recognize that deception and self-deception play integral roles *in* the process of gaining—or fleeing from—knowledge of one's presumably true self.

However, in the sense of fleeing from knowledge, we might also say that Rouault's interest in prostitutes and judges is not as much epistemological as it is *anti*-epistemological—that is, it highlights the unlikelihood, the virtual impossibility, of self-knowledge. After all, from the standpoint of Schloesser's Rouault, what we call self-knowledge is also likely to be a mask. In the face of the human condition of being, in effect, condemned to our masks, Rouault declares in empathetic despair that he feels "helpless," unable to judge the judge who judges the criminal, as if the judgment (and the judge) were grounded in the truly just—and for Schloesser's Rouault, that *is* the mask, with robes, hats, and hair pieces being its accessories.

Rouault's proposition that "we are all clowns [or judges], more or less" evokes the painter's slightly older contemporary, Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), who in 1900 was inventing a science of introspection. Rouault's *aperçu* specifically recalls Freud's view that we are all hysterics, more or less. Amid the pervasive *fin-de-siècle* panic that borders were becoming dangerously porous—between the Beautiful and the Ugly, the normal and perverted, male and female—Rouault and Freud were among the period's intellectuals and artists who, to the distress of their contemporaries, proposed that such borders are porous by their very nature.

The charge of being "attracted to the ugly" points to another link between Rouault and Freud. On account of the latter's preoccupation with the sexual, the genital, the anal, the perverse, the neurotic, the deviant and the hysterical, Freud, too, has long been denounced for his attraction to the presumptively ugly dimensions of human life. In the latter dimensions, moreover, both the Viennese psychoanalyst and the French painter find some of the most human dimensions—human, all too human.

In the service of illuminating Rouault's attention to prostitutes, judges, and their epistemological significance, I want briefly to explore Freud's *The Schreber Case,* published in 1908, the same year in which Rouault completed his *Femme (Whore/Woman with Red/brown-Colored Hair)* **(no. 10)**. I begin by noting, first, a difference between the two men that has meaning only in the present context. In contrast to Rouault, Freud, who certainly had a great deal to say about the question of self-knowledge, was not drawn to the study and representation of prostitutes or judges; and, second, that thinking about Rouault through Freud entails thinking about Freud through Rouault.

1908: A Male Judge (Un/Justly) Judges Himself a Female Prostitute

Psychoanalysis is one of the great modernist paths to the vaunted goal of self-knowledge. It is also a method whose central concepts—the unconscious, Oedipus complex, repression, ambivalence, displacement, projection, transference, countertransference, manifest and latent, death instinct, and constitutional bisexuality—so problematize the knowing subject as to delineate the unlikelihood of knowledge of one's self. Like Rouault (and Nietzsche and Oscar Wilde, as well), Freud was fascinated by the masks that we, especially in the world of Respectability, slip on, by the question of what might lie behind the masks, and by the activity of prying them off by calling attention to them.

In precisely the years in which Rouault was turning to lawyers and judges as subjects—he began in 1907—Freud was immersed in an examination of Daniel Paul Schreber (1842-1911), a contemporary and prominent German judge who had suffered an incapacitating paranoid schizophrenic breakdown in the early-1890s. In the delusional world created in the throes of his crisis, he erased the social and sexual distance between the judge and the (female) prostitute. In effect, the judge *became* a (female) prostitute.

In 1908, the year Rouault completed his *Femme (Whore/Woman with Red/brown-Colored Hair)*, Freud published his essay, "Psychoanalytic Remarks on an Autobiographically Described Case of Paranoia." It analyzed Schreber's *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness* (1903), written in what proved to be a successful effort to convince his doctors to release him from the Sonnenstein asylum (although he was eventually forced to return and would die there in 1911).[4] Freud's essay was subsequently published as a small book, *The Schreber Case*.[5]

Soon after his appointment as Chief Justice of the Cologne Court of Appeals in 1894, Schreber suffered the second and most debilitating of two mental breakdowns. In *Memoirs*, he recounts awakening one morning to the thought that it would be "extremely pleasant" to "submit to sexual intercourse as a woman." Schreber was initially convinced that his physician, Dr. Paul Emil Flechsig, who had cured Schreber of a previous breakdown in the mid-1880s, had implanted the thought in him. However, the judge soon came to believe that God had selected him to serve as his cheap but voluptuous concubine, employing "divine rays" to take control of Schreber's nerves and nerve-endings, and transform him into a woman.

By such a route, that is, from persecution mania to religious megalomania, Schreber would come to imagine himself to be a (female) Redeemer of a humanity that had become "soul dead." Impregnated by God, the judge would give birth to a rejuvenated race of "New Humans." In the years of asylum confinement, much of it solitary, Schreber, who often wanted to die, was tormented by voices—those of birds, cackling in strange sounds, and of "fleetingly improvised men"—who teased him. Addressing him as "Miss Schreber" and in terms that were already circulating in *fin-de-siècle* popular culture, these voices mocked him: "And this individual who lets himself be f-d calls himself a one-time Presiding Judge? Aren't you ashamed to face your lady wife"? (Schreber was married.)

There were better moments: when he moved his bowels, he often experienced a "most powerful emotion of voluptuousness of the soul," because "all the [divine] rays are united during defecation and pissing." His skin took on "the softness that is peculiar to the female sex." Schreber found that, by exerting pressure on various areas of his skin, particularly around his chest and "especially while thinking of something feminine," he was "able to attain a sensation of voluptuousness that corresponds to that of women." Male voluptuousness, Schreber believed, is found only in and around the sexual organ. Although Schreber initially had resisted (with what Freud calls "masculine indignation") the dream of being a woman enjoying sexual intercourse with a man, he soon made his peace with it, seeing it as an effect of God's higher intentions. "Since then," Schreber wrote, "I have quite consciously inscribed the cultivation of femininity upon my banner." One tries to imagine Rouault's representation on canvas of such a judge—or of Freud.

Freud represents Schreber's delusional world as the mechanism that the judge's psyche chose for purposes of warding off a "feminine (passively

homosexual) wishful fantasy, which had taken the person of the doctor as its object." This fantasy "provoked an intensive resistance on the part of Schreber's personality," Freud continues (ignoring the question of why the fantasy should have provoked resistance rather than, for example, curiosity, interest, or elation), "and the defensive struggle, which might perhaps have been pursued in other forms, elected for reasons unknown to us that of a delusion of persecution. He who had been longed for thus became a persecutor."

Freud's stated goal in *The Schreber Case* could be called Rouaultian (in the Schloesserian sense) in so far as it suggests that we are all Schrebers, more or less: "I shall therefore have to be content if I am successful in tracing with a degree of certainty the core at least of the delusional structure back to its origin in familiar human motivation," that is, in sexual drives that are innate in everyone.

Such "human motivation" might have been called "familiar" only in psychoanalytic circles, which in 1908 were not extensive, even if they were growing. The Vienna Psychoanalytic Society was established in that year and Freud would bring what he called "the plague" of psychoanalysis to the United States in 1910. Indeed, recent discussions of Freud's Schreber show that, in such circles and in Freud as well, his contention regarding Judge Schreber was as fraught as it was familiar. A "feminine (passively homosexual) wishful fantasy" is not restricted to those persons, relatively few in number, who are designated as homosexual; rather, it is embedded in the unconscious mind of every person, "straight," as well as "gay" (in present-day language), and female as well as male.

Schreber resolved the conflict of his persecution complex by replacing the doctor and father with God. "If it was an impossible matter to come to terms with the role of the female prostitute in relation to the doctor," Freud writes, "then the task of offering to God Himself the voluptuous pleasure He seeks does not encourage the same resistance on the part of the ego." In the asylum, the judge embraced his soul voluptuousness, sometimes admiring himself in the mirror as the cross-dressed Miss Schreber.

Freud's Mask: Avoiding Self-Judgment

Rouault saw himself in clowns, judges, and prostitutes. Freud was less ready to see himself in the judge, a reluctance that goes against the grain of his insight that we are all hysterics, his idea of "familiar human motivation" in connection with the judge's case, and his concept of countertransference, according to which the analyst, too, develops affective investments in the patient. Freud hints at his identification with Schreber when he suggests that, in his *Memoirs*, the judge is a crypto-psychoanalyst who expresses himself "on countless occasions in the manner of a follower of our prejudice. He always speaks of 'nervosity' and erotic lapses in the same breath, as if the two were inseparable." Uncomfortably for Freud, while his most gifted disciples (Carl Gustav Jung and Alfred Adler) were breaking away from him on this very issue in 1908, the delusional Schreber thinks as Freud does, seeing the sexual as the source of the psychic. The hint of deeper identifications with Schreber is notable primarily because Freud does not pursue them.

Instead, Freud pursued his thesis that the judge's illness originated in a surge of homosexual libido, the "feminine (passively homosexual) wish fantasy," for which, Freud suggests, Schreber had been, in effect, prepared by his, and his wife, Sabine's, childlessness. This pushed the thesis to the broader conclusion that, in males, the "core of the conflict" in paranoia in all of its forms is traceable to a defense against a homosexual urge, the feeling that "'*I (a man) love him (a man)*'"(emphasis is Freud's).

As with everything in psychoanalysis, the symptoms of male paranoia do not form randomly but according to a rule: that a "feeling [of homosexual wish fantasy] as inner perception should be replaced by a perception from without." In other words, in 1908, more than six decades before the term, homophobia, was coined, Freud presented a theory of it as a defense mechanism against one's own homosexual desire. Today, while the number of people in the United States who recognize the efficacy of Freud's theory of homophobia increases daily, this stands in an inverse relation to those

among that number who know that the theory is Freud's. Even Freud proceeded not knowing that the theory was his.

1908-2008: A Hundred Years of Receptions

Rouault's *Femme (Whore/Woman With Red/brown-Colored Hair)* and Freud's *The Schreber Case* have rich reception histories. Freud's little book is also the first (and most pivotal) text in the contentious history of the reception of Schreber's *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*. I can touch here only on some high points.

Dormant for decades after Freud's study, interest in the Judge's remarkable story reignited in the wake of World War II, when the question of Schreber became entwined in the question of how Hitler and Auschwitz had happened. In 1961, Elias Canetti's last two chapters of *Crowds and Power* (his analysis of totalitarian movements) located in Schreber's combination of paranoia and megalomania a microcosm and germ of the psyches of Nazi, Fascist, and Communist leaders.[6] After the "battered child syndrome" had been put on the medical and cultural map in the mid-1960s, Morton Schatzman's *Soul Murder: Persecution in the Family* (1974) argued that Schreber's breakdown was brought on by the traumatic return of repressed memories of abuse, not directly sexual, at the hands his father, Dr. Moritz Schreber. Schreber *père* had been an immensely popular mid-nineteenth-century German child-rearing specialist (then a new career open to talent), dedicated to instilling in the very young Respectability's values of beauty and health. An inventor of restraining devices to improve children's posture and behavior and also an author of the best-selling *Medical Home Gymnastics* (with translated versions in England, the United States and France),[7] Schreber was, by present-day standards, a tyrannical and perhaps even sadistic, parent. Nazis, Schatzman suggested (not quite accurately), had been raised by Schreber *père*'s methods.

In the 1990s, in the wake of feminism, post-structuralism, gay liberation and queer theory, critical currents in Jewish studies, and psychoanalysis itself, a wave of studies produced a new Schreber and a new Freud—a "Schreber's Freud," that is, a Freud examined through the lens of Schreber's male effeminacy. With distinctive emphases and arguments, Sander Gilman, Daniel Boyarin, and Eric Santner all read the Freud text on the model of its reading of Schreber's *Memoirs*[8]—that is, psychoanalytically, as an account of the symptoms of its author's (Freud's) investments in the case, precisely around matters of gender, homosexual attraction, and Jewishness.

Santner emphasizes, for example, that *Memoirs of My Mental Illness* recounts Schreber's divine transformation not only into a woman, but into the Wandering Jew, as well—a fact that Freud does not mention. In the face of the respectable and manly judge's *identification* with woman and Jew, Freud, according to Santner, cried out, "I am not *that*!" For the Jewish, queer theory-inflected Schreber scholars, *The Schreber Case* is the longer version of that cry. In it, they find the masks that Freud put on. In the masks that Schreber donned after his judge and masculinity masks fell off—of woman, prostitute, and Jew—the "Schreberians" find an anti-Fascist *avant la lettre*.

Reception continues. From the Schreber that Freud created in 1908, Gilman, Boyarin, and Santner in the 1990s drew a critical model for a post-Zionist, twenty-first century American, Jewish male identity that one need not be Jewish in order to adopt as one's own. Perhaps in 2008, exactly one century after its creation, Rouault's *Whore (Woman with Red/brown-Colored Hair)* occupies a parallel place in the evolution of North American Catholicism.

Endnotes

1 George L. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe* (New York: H. Fertig, 1985).

2 Cesare Lombroso and Guglielmo Ferrero, *La Donna delinquente: la prostituta e la donna normale* (Torino: L. Roux, 1893).

3 For the Latin term, I am grateful to Professor David Gill, SJ, of the Boston College Classics Department.

4 Daniel Paul Schreber, *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness* (New York: New York Review of Books, 2000); orig. Schreber, *Denkwürdigkeiten eines Nervenkranken: nebst Nachträgen und einem Anhang über die Frage: "Unter welchen Voraussetzungen darf eine für geisteskrank erachtete Person gegen ihren erklärten Willen in einer Heilanstalt festgehalten werden?"* (Leipzig: O. Mutze, 1903).

5 Sigmund Freud, *The Schreber Case* (New York: Penguin Classics Psychology, 2003); orig. Freud, *Psychoanalytische Bemerkungen über einen autobiographisch beschriebenen Fall von Paranoia (Dementia paranoides)* (Wien?: Deuticke, 1911).

6 Morton Schatzman, *Soul Murder: Persecution in the Family* (New York: New American Library, 1974).

7 Daniel Gottlieb Moritz Schreber, *Die Eigenthümlichkeiten des kindlichen Organismus im gesunden und kranken Zustande: eine Propädeutik der speciellen Kinderheilkunde* (Leipzig: Friedrich Fleischer, 1852); Schreber, Kallipädie; oder, Erziehung zur Schönheit durch naturgetreue und gleichmässige Förderung normaler Körperbildung, lebenstüchtiger Gesundheit und geistiger Veredelung und insbesondere durch möglichste Benutzung specieller Erziehungsmittel. Für Aeltern, Erzieher und Lehrer (Leipzig: Fleischer, 1858); Schreber, *Illustrated Medical in-door Gymnastics;* or, *A System of medico-hygienic Exercises Requiring* no *Mechanical or other Aid, and Adapted to both Sexes and all Ages, and for Special Cases* (London & Edinburgh: Williams & Norgate; Leipzig: R. Hartmann, 1856); Dio Lewis, Moritz Kloss, Daniel Gottlieb Moritz Schreber, *The new gymnastics for men, women, and children.* With a translation of Prof. Kloss's Dumbbell instructor and Prof. Schreber's Pangymnastikon, 3rd ed. (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1862); Schreber, G*ymnastique de chambre médicale et hygiénique; ou, Représentation et description de mouvements gymnastiques*, 5th ed., trans. from 15th German ed. (Paris: Masson, 1885).

8 Sander L. Gilman, *Freud, Race, and Gender* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1993); Eric L. Santner, *My Own Private Germany: Daniel Paul Schreber's Secret History of Modernity* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1996); Daniel Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1997). See also, Daniel Pyster's remarkable essay, "How Queer Are We? Freud, Herzl, and the Schreberian Reconstruction of Jewish Masculinity," Senior Honors Thesis, History Department, Boston College, 2006.

PART III: 1921–1929

1921–1929: Jazz Age Graphic Shock

Stephen Schloesser

> As Maslow has well said, "It is precisely the god-like in ourselves that we are ambivalent about, fascinated by and fearful of, motivated to and defensive against. This is one aspect of the basic human predicament, that we are simultaneously worms and gods." There it is again: gods with anuses.[1]

I. 1921–1923: *Miserere:* Site of Memory, Site of Mourning[2]

On May 27, 1921, Rouault reached the half-century mark. His *Autoportrait* (1920-1921) produced at this time seems intended to recall the chiaroscuro of Rembrandt's *Self Portrait with Gorget and Beret* (ca. 1629, **fig. 1**). In both works, the brightly lit left side of the face trails off rightward into darkness. Rouault's black-and-blue-tinted-grey melange evokes a craftsman's face: spattered by an artisan's paint, smudged by a smithy's soot, or made up by an entertainer's greasepaint. It recalls Rouault's self-proclaimed origins: "I believe [...] that in the context of the massacres, fires and horrors, I have retained (from the cellar in which I was born) in my eyes and in my mind the fleeting matter which good fire fixes and incrusts."[3] It also provides the ideal image for the Rouault of the 1920s—largely a graphic artist who would work on (along with numerous smaller pieces) three projected large series in this decade: the *Miserere* (interrupted in 1927); the *Fleurs du Mal* (interrupted in 1927); and the *Réincarnations du Père Ubu* (printed in 1928; published in 1932).

The fifty-year milestone was marked by the first monograph devoted solely to Rouault, written by Michel Puy and published as volume 8 in "the new French painters" series of the *Nouvelle Revue Française* (**fig. 2**).[4] Discussing the artist's clowns, prostitutes, and judges, Puy emphasized the distinction between appearances and reality: "Rouault, who has resumed painting religious scenes at various times, is a religious spirit. *Under the human rag, he discerns the soul.*" In particular, Puy underscored the epistemological and moral problems of human judgment. In the judicial system, wrote Puy, one sensed "a life where the essential interests of individuals are at play, that a deep emotion hides itself under all the theatrical apparatus, and that nevertheless the task of the judge is an impossible one: for there is no human justice and the judgments made are no better than compromises and approximations."[5]

Perhaps reaching the fifty-year mark also instilled Rouault with a sense of mortality and limited time, impelling him to redirect his energies away from Ubu and toward a renewed effort at the *Miserere*. It could also have been a response to André Saurès's stinging repudiation of the project in 1919, complaining in a letter to Rouault that he was wasting valuable time on a subject Suarès deemed unworthy: "All these Ubuseries aren't worth a damn," wrote Suarès. "Six months of it, okay; but six years are five too many. You have gone to a lot of trouble just to nail yourself to the bottom of hell, in the circle of vile mockery, where the soul is but a thermometer of shit."[6]

In 1922, with the assistance of Suarès, Rouault settled definitively on the title *MISERERE* (HAVE MERCY ON ME) and eliminated the second half, "*et Guerre*" (and War). Rouault explained:

> I had chosen for the title Miserere et Guerre, but you know the importance and the [visual] play of empty spaces in typography. Having composed the cover [I found that] Miserere et Guerre didn't play well: the letters were too small for the "*Suaire*" [shroud; Sudarium] below; finally, I got the idea of creating a single title: Miserere in large letters. Immediately, the page appeared beautiful, the play was established—in addition, Guerre is French, Miserere is Latin.[7]

This last addition does not make clear whether Rouault wanted to avoid a melange of two languages or whether he was simply stating a clear preference for Latin. Rouault's affection for Latin references can be seen throughout the *Miserere*, nicely demonstrated by two unfinished preparatory studies (dated pre-1926) for one of its plates bearing the legend *Sunt lacrymae rerum*... (**nos. 73** and **74**): "There are tears at the very heart of things."[8] Perhaps no line in the *Miserere* expresses better this series' function as a "site of memory and site of mourning" in this decade so profoundly marked by bereavement and monument building.[9]

The choice of keeping only the Latin title *MISERERE* was completely attuned to the neo-classical vogue of the postwar era. The year 1922 (in which Rouault made this decision about the title) stands as an exemplar of the postwar paradox: on the one hand, it represented the inaugural year of high modernism as Ezra Pound proclaimed it the revolutionary Year I of the post-Christian era[10]; on the other hand, 1922 also saw Jean Cocteau's production of the ancient Greek *Antigone*, his own translation accompanied by Pablo Picasso's scenery, Coco Chanel's costumes, and Arthur Honegger's music. In his open letter to Cocteau, Jacques Maritain interpreted the event in terms of semblance and reality: "You have an admirably jealous longing for freedom. How well I understand your love for Antigone! Yet she herself tells us, and that is why she is dear to you, that in breaking human law, she was following a better commandment—the

Fig. 1. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Self-Portrait with Gorget and Beret*, ca. 1629, 42.8 x 33 cm. Indianapolis Museum of Art, the Clowes Fund Collection, Indianapolis

Fig. 2. Cover, Michel Puy, *Georges Rouault* (Paris: Éditions de la "Nouvelle revue française," 1921)

Fig. 3. Albrecht Dürer, *Ecce Homo* (Large Passion) 1498-99. Woodcut Block: 15 7/16 x 11 3/16 in. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Bequest of Mrs. Horatio Greenough Curtis, by exchange, 1968

unwritten and unchangeable laws."[11] "Classicism is Memory and Sorrow."[12]

Rouault's reference in his letter to the "*Suaire*" provides more layers of meaning. The word "*suaire*" translates primarily as "shroud" (as in the Shroud of Turin)—obviously, an artifact having to do with death and bereavement—and only by extension as the "veil" of Veronica known as the "Sudarium." It seems from Rouault's letter that the image of Veronica's Sudarium was originally meant to appear on the cover. Although eventually the cover was published without any image whatsoever, Rouault's reference underscores the centrality of this Sudarium image which nevertheless remains the lynchpin holding the series together. As discussed above with respect to his youthful *Le Chemin du Calvaire* (**no. 1**, produced thirty years earlier), it is very likely that Rouault had encountered this tradition of Veronica's veil by reading Emmerich's *The Dolorous Passion of Christ*. It is difficult to say when exactly he would have seen late-medieval and early-modern prints of this devotion, but Veronica's Sudarium was an extremely popular image. One of the most accessible versions would have been *The Sudarium* by the seventeenth-century engraver, Claude Mellan (see Reinburg essay in this volume).

What seems certain, as suggested earlier, is that 1902-1904 marks the moment at which Rouault turned to medieval works, not out of romantic neo-medievalist motivations, but rather out of modernist neo-primitivist ones. (The parallel with Picasso's use of African masks for neo-primitivist ends, e.g., *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* [1907], is suggestive.) Rouault used "primitive" artifacts and types to revitalize religious art that had become an outworn genre, for example, Albrecht Dürer's *Ecce Homo (Large Passion)* (Behold the Man, 1498-99 [**fig. 3**]) and Hans Sebald Beham's sixteenth-century *Large Head of Christ* (**fig. 4**). Rouault's neo-primitivist works demonstrate the ironic logic of the avant-garde, one that owed a great debt to Baudelaire who had first proclaimed, "Modernism is our antiquity."[13] Just as Rouault was making his decision about the *Miserere*, a 1923 book about the Atelier Primavera (the in-house workshop of the fashionable department store *Au Printemps*) could proclaim: "The artist today no longer disdains the antique. He simply knows how to see it in a modern way, to make allusions, discreet quotes, highly modified borrowings that take the form of a homage. Thus, instead of going against tradition, our modern art easily ties in with it, adjusts it to itself."[14] Picasso turned to Africa; Rouault returned to Flanders.

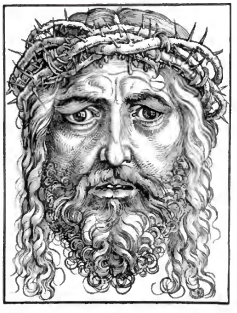


Fig. 4. Hans Sebald Beham, *Large Head of Christ*, early-mid-16th c. Formerly attributed to Albrecht Dürer. Woodcut Image: 16 15/16 x 12 11/16 in. Sheet: 19 5/8 x 12 13/16 in. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Three unfinished depictions of the Sudarium dated "before 1922" all suggest that it was during this period (1912-22), alongside the intense labor devoted to Ubu's Africa, that Rouault

worked on recasting this "primitive" image with his own modernist stamp. All three bear the same title, a poetic fragment from Rouault that sums up the vision of the *Miserere*: "And Veronica with tender linen (Holy Face) [still walks the road…]" (**nos. 41, 71, 72, 75**). Rouault sees humanity as being essentially wayfarers, fugitives, gypsies, bohemians on the road. Veronica is still there, offering the pilgrim her linen veil—a compassionate act become revelation.

II. 1924–1929: Retrospective Remembrances

For Rouault, the decade of mourning would become especially personal with the death of his mother in 1924 (**fig. 5**). His deep affection for her is suggested in numerous works devoted to poignant depictions of mothers and children in the *faubourgs*, and he was keenly aware of the debt he owed her in having financially assisted his artistic education. It would seem, too, that his relationship to her was far less complex than that with his father.

Fig. 5. Georges Rouault and mother on a walk, ca. 1907, Rouault's personal photograph. Photo courtesy Fondation Georges Rouault

It seems more than coincidental, then, that the years following 1924 were a time of retrospection and remembrance for Rouault. His mother's death happened to coincide with a large retrospective held at the Galerie Druet, the scene of his first solo exhibition held fourteen years earlier. As in the 1920 Licorne exhibition, the 1924 Druet reviews again show the way in which a postwar culture, steeped in mourning and introspection, could receive Rouault's work with a positive appreciation of his vision previously thought too harsh for the "Belle Époque."[15] His friend Maritain, who had written his first review for Rouault in 1910 under a pseudonym, had now become a rising intellectual and cultural figure, especially following the publication of *Art and Scholasticism* (1920).[16] Maritain published his Druet retrospective review in *La Revue universelle*, the journal he co-founded after the war. He had come a long distance from needing to write under a pseudonym.

In 1926, at age fifty-five, Rouault published *Souvenirs intimes* (1926), a series of "personal remembrances" devoted to those who had been important influences on him. The published folio version also includes a number of engraved portraits, one being a self-portrait (**no. 22e**). The painted variant of this self-portrait, owned by the national museum at the Centre Pompidou, is entitled "Apprentice-Worker," once again emphasizing Rouault's self-conception as an artisan. After an introductory exchange of letters between Suarès and Rouault, the remembrances follow: Moreau, Bloy, Baudelaire, Paul Cézanne, Auguste Renoir, Daumier, Huysmans, and somewhat surprisingly, Edgar Dégas.

The choice to conclude the volume with Dégas, surely a minor character in Rouault's personal pantheon, seems extremely odd for someone who arranged all things with such exacting attention to details. However, a closer look at the final lines of that particular *souvenir* (and hence, of the entire book) provides an unexpected find. Recalling his encounter with the old artist, Rouault writes:

> With regard to a certain present-day anarchy and the admirable technique of the ancients: "We will have to become slaves again" ("*Il faudra redevenir esclaves*") [Dégas] told me in a low voice. Meanwhile, along the rue Victor-Masse, out-of-breath newspaper vendors cried out in confusion [*en pagaye*], "Liberty! Humanity! Intran!"[17]

On the most basic level, Rouault is simply restating his conviction that artists needed to apprentice

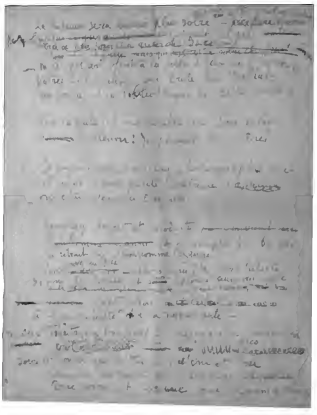


Fig. 6. Manuscript letter, Georges Rouault to Armand Dayot, dated 15 Sept. 1925. Boston Public Library, Ms. Fr 32. Photo: Stephen Vedder

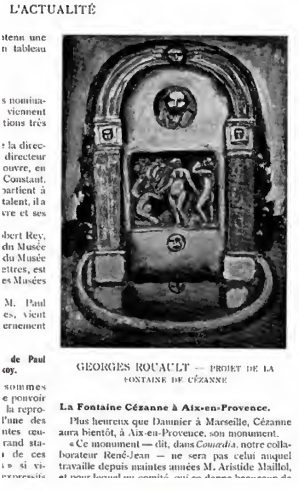
themselves to old masters and root their practice in values lasting over time, contrasting such permanence with the political fashions of the moment shouted by both left (*Liberté! Humanité!*) and right (*l'Intran!*, i.e., *L'Echo de Paris*). But on a deeper level, it is worth underscoring that Rouault concludes his "personal remembrances" with a reference to his recurrent motif—the slave.

Another element of retrospection is seen in a letter written to Armand Dayot (**fig. 6**).[18] An art historian and critic, Dayot was also the founder of *L'Art et les Artistes* (in which a lengthy amount of Rouault's correspondence with André Suarès was published the following year[19]). In this manuscript, filled with numerous strikeouts and rewrites, Rouault's initial words indicate a photograph he was intending to send Dayot: "Here is the photo of the small fountain for which you asked and which I hope will be satisfactorily received dear Monsieur Dayot.—already for some time now—put up at Aix en Provence hometown (*ville natale*) of Cézanne" (**fig. 7**). From here Rouault launches into lines of verse, many of which are then vigorously scratched out and rewritten. Another page seems to continue Rouault's thoughts:

The fountain will be much darker than the one in this photograph more probably it will be in sandstone. <three lines scratched out> M. A[mbroise] Vollard offered to the city <illegible> in Provence homeland of Cezanne a bust of [Louis] Valtat which will go to the library of this city—Then he showed me a bas relief ~~bronze~~ of Renoir: Judgment of Paris—I asked him for a photograph because the idea of a small fountain ~~Cezanne~~ had come to my mind

discreet and moderate homage ~~which would be suitable for the good chap Cezanne~~ an example of the life in retreat of the good chap Cezanne.

Rouault is writing here with reference to a notice that would appear two months later in the "Actualité" (Current Events) pages of the November 1925 issue of *L'Art et les Artistes* (**fig. 7**). The column, "La Fontaine Cézanne à Aix-en-Provence," praised Vollard for his "individual liberality" in donating the fountain completely on his own. A photograph of



L'ACTUALITÉ

GEORGES ROUAULT — PROJET DE LA FONTAINE DE CÉZANNE

La Fontaine Cézanne à Aix-en-Provence.

Plus heureux que Daumier à Marseille, Cézanne aura bientôt, à Aix-en-Provence, son monument.

« Ce monument — dit, dans *Comœdia*, notre collaborateur René-Jean — ne sera pas celui auquel travaille depuis maintes années M. Aristide Maillol,

Fig. 7. "L'Actualité: La Fontaine Cézanne à Aix-en-Provence," *L'Art et les Artistes* 20/61 (November 1925) 69. Document courtesy Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris

Chronique

DEUX POÈMES DE GEORGES ROUAULT

Fig. 8. Georges Rouault, "Deux poèmes," *L'Amour de l'art* (November 1925) 445. Cézanne fountain at upper right. cf. Fig. 7, Calvary upper left.

the fountain's model (which Rouault sent Dayot along with this September 1925 manuscript) was inserted above the column with the caption "GEORGES ROUAULT—Plan of the Fountain of Cézanne," and a line in the notice specified that "The model, which we are reproducing here, is owed to the painter Georges Rouault."[20]

Rouault had written and published a very long poem inspired by this fountain (along with the same photograph as above) in *L'Amour de l'art* that same year, an article that Rouault seems to reference on a later page of his letter to Dayot ("If you do not want to are not able to trouble yourself there is an issue of *l'Amour de l'Art*"). The illustration here appears with the caption "plan for a monument to Cézanne, conceived by Georges Rouault and offered to the city of Aix by Ambroise Vollard." (**fig. 8**) (The 1920s context of mourning and monument building is set by the other illustration in this article, a Calvary: "project for a monument to the dead of Yser."[21]) Rouault's accompanying lengthy poem, filled with lavish praise for Cézanne and bitter contempt for his critics, was entitled "Homage to the Solitary" ("Hommage au Solitaire"). In part it reads:

> At Aix-en-Provence, clear fountain, I
> dreamed of hearing you sing.
>
> Clear fountain
> Far away from the criticizing microbes
> (*microbes critiquants*) so frequently
> severe
> In judging you they are judged (*En vous*
> *jugeant se sont jugés*),
> in weighing you they are weighed (*en vous*
> *pesant se sont pesés*).[22]
>
> Orpheus in his form cherished, vanished in
> the night[23]
> Still holds out his arms.
>
> Everything is poison for certain old fogeys,
> everything is poison: ancient and
> modern.
> Sometimes dauntless ones considering
> themselves to be in sacred tradition
> Are deceased of chronic constipation (*De*
> *constipation chronique sont décédés*),
> everything is poison.[24]

In the 1925 manuscript, six pages in total, Rouault covers a lot of ground and it is difficult to tell whether it is in fact a letter, notes for several letters, notes for poetic verses, or simply pages that happened to be available. Whatever their intent, a close reading of the pages provides a fascinating glimpse of Rouault's mind at work. Several lines written consecutively (although perhaps not intentionally joined together) connect themes we have seen repeatedly:

> Of Pascal they ~~make~~ have made essentially
> a mathematician ~~only~~
> and of you Cezanne <~~illegible~~> a blind man
> (*un aveugle*)
> a poor man, a failure (*un pauvre homme, un*
> *raté*)

as well as placed you among humorists
(*vous ont situé*)

Miserere
in these times so advanced (*si avancés*)
Christian and animal antediluvian (*chrétien et animal antediluvien*)
and still I do believe ~~not having been~~ not ever existed (*n'a jamais existé*)[25]
<line scribbled out>[26]

Pascal, Cézanne, and *Miserere*—these few lines get right to the heart of Rouault.

Rouault continued his project of memory and memorialization with a series of six lithographs published in 1929 entitled *La Petite banlieue* (1929), "the little working-class district." Revisiting the Belleville of his childhood (and perhaps the Versailles squalor from which his family had escaped ten years earlier), Rouault looked back without sentimentality beginning with the first plate—*De profundis*, "Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord"—an image of a graveyard. (*De profundis* is the legend Rouault had first used after his father's death in 1912; now his mother had followed.[27] See also *De profundis*, 1927, **no. 27ss**).

The following five images all bear the primary title *Faubourg des longues peines* (Impoverished district of long-time sufferings (cf. *Au vieux faubourg des Longues Peines,* 1923, **no. 27k**). Each plate then has its own subtitle: "Moving" (*Déménagement*) depicts a family moving its belongings from one place to another using a cart pulled by the family's father. It recalls Daumier's displaced circus family, *Déplacement des Saltimbanques* (see Schloesser, "1871-1901"). Others include "The Poor Family"; "Impasse" (the Rouaults had lived at 15 impasse des Gendarmes in Versailles, an "impasse" being a dead-end street[28]); "The Poor Church," a family of three standing in front of a church tower (one of Rouault's favorite recurring images[29]); and *Dans la rue* (In the Street, **no. 23**).

It is notable that all of these scenes (with the exception of the initial graveyard scene) are outdoor street scenes, as though the impoverished life is always lived "on the streets"—i.e., homeless. "Realistic" in the sense that they depict the harsh experience of poverty, these scenes are also somewhat "surrealistic" in their emptiness: there is no sign of any other persons (indeed, of any other life except for a dog in the "impasse") in squalid neighborhoods whose streets would presumably be teeming with other inhabitants. *Dans la rue* exemplifies these eerie urban landscapes. As the seemingly abandoned characterless buildings hover over the lonely little family of three in the street, no faces peer out the black square windows. As in other images produced by Rouault in the 1920s (cf. *Rue des solitaires*, **no. 27i**; and *Solitaire, en cette vie d'embûches et de malices* (**no. 27h**), these people are alone in an abandoned world.

Rouault's expressionistic anguish echoes the rise of existentialist thought in the postwar decade which saw a renaissance of interest in the proto-existentialist work of Søren Kierkegaard. In 1927, Martin Heidegger published *Being and Time* (soon followed by a work that it inspired, Ortega y Gasset's *Revolt of the Masses*, 1930; and then André Malraux, *The Human Condition*, 1933[30]). Heidegger theorized human being as being burdened with the anxiety (*Angst*) produced by knowledge, self-conscious of having been thrown into historical time—quite literally, "there-being" (*Dasein*)—a condition of "not-being-at-home" (*das Nichtzuhausesein*) without any apparent reason or indications of what one ought to do.[31] As noted above, however, these anxieties were not merely theoretical knowledge for Rouault; they had been experienced at a profound level after the death of Moreau: "*I experienced absolute solitude*" ("*Je connus une solitude complète*"[32]).

A plate made around this time for the *Miserere* (later cancelled) echoes these themes. Its title, *"Super flumina Babylonis"* (**no. 24**), is rich in semantic layers.[33] As the quotation marks suggest, the title is quoted from the first line of the Latin Vulgate version of Psalm 136 (137):

Super flumina Babylonis
illic sedimus et flevimus, cum recordaremur Sion.
By the rivers of Babylon—

there we sat down and there we wept when
we remembered Zion.
On the willows there we hung up our harps.
For there our captors asked us for songs,
and our tormentors asked for mirth,
saying,
"Sing us one of the songs of Zion!"
How could we sing the LORD's song in a
foreign land?[34]

The themes of performance and masque recur: like Samuel who is asked to perform and entertain his Philistine captors (see **no. 4**), so too the people of Israel are asked to entertain their tormentors with the exotic foreign melodies of their lost homeland. Rouault semantically overlays this small homeless family on the road, evocative of Daumier's small family of Saltimbanques—a homeless trio whose livelihood consists of performing for others—with the exiled Israelites who cannot perform without weeping.

The work also goes by another less authoritative but more commonly accepted title: *Exode* (French for *Exodus*), a reference adding yet another semantic layer.[35] In the Exodus, the Israelites are not dragged into Babylonian captivity but rather escape from Egyptian slavery. This reference to great migrations of people follows the work of Daumier.[36] Daumier not only drew and painted *Fugitives* and *Emigrants* but also produced sculptural statues and friezes of them—which Rouault would have seen at the Louvre—based in part on casts of fragments of Trajan's column which Daumier owned.[37] As Henri Loyrette observes, while many nineteenth-century artists "depicted picturesque caravans filing happily through a luminous desert—thus helping to spread a superficial taste for orientalism—Daumier presented a view of the defeated, of human beings doomed to wander endlessly through this earthly wilderness, beneath an indifferent heaven, no longer knowing whither or why."[38]

In his numerous depictions of homeless wanderers, Rouault also drew on Jacques Callot's *Beggars* (**fig. 9**), *Bohemians* or *Gypsies* (see fig. 4 in J. Michalczyk's essay), as well as Manet's *Gypsies* (see fig. 15 in Schloesser, "1871-1920").[39] These various

Fig. 9. Jacques Callot, *Beggar*, ca. 1622-23, etching. Private Collection

images of movement, summarized iconographically by the Sudarium (Veronica on the road), served Rouault as metaphors for his fundamental vision of human existence: being "on the way" is the state proper to being human and a mark of Rouault's protagonists; stasis, indicating presumption and self-satisfaction, is a mark of Rouault's antagonists.[40] Given Rouault's wide range of reading, it is likely he would have known Saint Augustine's central image for the Christian as a resident alien in the Roman Empire: always a *peregrinus* (both foreigner and traveler), never a settled citizen during this earthly *peregrinatio* (travel away from home).[41] Augustine, in turn, drew on Plotinus, who linked the homeward travel with shutting one's eyes:

> "Let us fly to our dear country." What then is our way of escape, and how are we to find it?…How shall we travel to it, where is our way of escape? We cannot get there on foot, for our feet only carry us everywhere in this world, from one country to another. You must not get ready a carriage, either, or a boat. Let all these things go, and do not look. Shut your eyes, and change to

> and wake another kind of seeing, which everyone has but few use.[42]

As Rouault writes in a prose chapter interspersed with poetic verse entitled "Exodus":

> Fugitives, are we not all such in this life? (*Fugitifs, le sommes-nous pas tous en cette vie?*) Those who would like to flee from (*fuir*) sickness, boredom, black poverty, abandonment (*l'ennui, la noire misère, l'abandon*)...
>
> The road is long (*La route est longue*)
> It descends and then mounts
> And descends yet again
> Until the end of Time (*Jusqu'à la fin des Temps*)
> Fugitives! (*Fugitifs!*)
> Springtime will come again
> It always comes again
> Like sorrow on the pilgrim (*Comme la douleur sur le pèlerin*).[43]

III. 1926-1927: Baudelaire's Beauty: Eternal + Fashionable

Between 1926 and 1927, Rouault finished fourteen black and white engravings of images for a projected publication of Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du mal* (**nos. 26a–n**). Although the project was abandoned and these plates would not be published during Rouault's lifetime,[44] they demonstrate the passion Rouault had for Baudelaire's work and vision—what Walter Benjamin called Baudelaire's "poetics of shock."[45] They also offer us insights into the other two series Rouault was working on at this time: the *Miserere* plates (worked on between 1922 and 1927) and *Réincarnations du Père Ubu* (worked on between 1916-1928), the only one of the three pro-jects that would soon be published (1932).[46]

Baudelaire theorized both "beauty" and "modernity" as a composite consisting of two entities: the eternal and the fashionable.[47] In the *Fleurs du mal* Satan represents eternal evil and Rouault created at least four depictions of this force. Three of these (**nos. 26a-c**) are figures whose hair style might be interpreted as wigs—specifically, powdered wigs of the eighteenth-century neo-classical era. If this reading is correct, then evil takes on the appearance of Enlightenment ideals: rationality, classical proportions, humanistic beauty. In the words of Baudelaire,

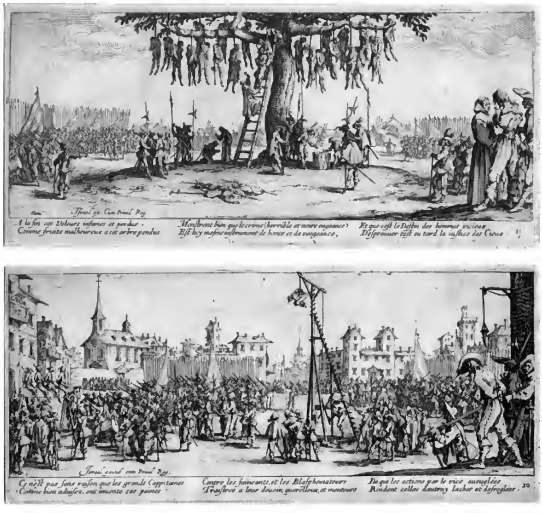
> I prize the memory of naked ages when
> Apollo relished gilding marble limbs
> whose agile-fleshed originals achieved
> their ecstasy with neither fraud nor fear
> and, nursed by that companionable sky,
> enjoyed the health of a sublime machine.[48]

These "limbs" loved by Apollo were both male and female and, indeed, *Satan IV* (**no. 26c**) seems to be androgynous, evoking lines from Baudelaire's "The Mask":

> It is a legacy of Tuscan skill;
> in ripples of her surging musculature...."[49]

Juxtaposing *Satan IV* alongside *C'est une femme belle et de riche encolure*...(**no. 26d**), it seems that Satan morphs almost imperceptibly into this richly dressed woman.

From the "eternal" Rouault passes to the "fashionable" and ephemeral in seven images of beautiful women intermingled with skeletons (**nos. 26d–k**). Rather than illustrating any particular text, Rouault has evoked the general world of Baudelaire who imagined the "ideal" and evil ("spleen") as dialectically interrelated. Unlike Satan's eternal beauty, the beauty of these women is transitory, fashionable, and all too horribly mortal (as revealed in the skeletons). The "richly dressed" woman (**no. 26d**) seems to pass away effortlessly into the skeleton who is "proud of her noble stature as if she were still alive" (**no. 26e**). The pose of the reclining *Squelette* (**no. 26h**) echoes that of the reclining Odalisque (*Lorsque tu dormiras, ma belle ténébreuse...*, **no. 26j**; cf. *Odalisque*, fig. 5 in Roberts essay in this volume) and can also be seen as the mirror image of the *Nu de profil* (**no. 26i**). Likewise, *La Débauche et la Mort*—Debauchery and Death, here personified as a bourgeois couple



Figs. 10 and 11. Jacques Callot, *The Hanging* (top), *The Strappado* (bottom) from *The Miseries and Disasters of War,* etchings, 3 3/8 x 7 7/16 in, each. Mead Art Museum, Amherst College, Amherst, MA. Gift of Edward C. Crossett (Class of 1905)

no. 26n), Satan seems to be so muscle-bound that he is stiff, immobile, and locked in place. He is less an acrobat than he is a *Superhomme* (**no. 19**). In contrast, Christ's mocked body is thin and agile, his contorted arms extended overhead in Michelangelo's slave pose. He reminds the viewer of Rouault's archetypal protagonist wrestler, *Être Dempsey* (**no. 25**), very likely produced contemporaneously with this mocked Christ.[51] Christ towers over his tormentor; the dwarfed mocker must strain his head back fully in order to take in the size of his victim. This extreme gesture adds to the dramatic irony of the moment: even as he must stretch his neck muscles to their limit, the mocker still mis-judges the identity of the mocked whom he strains to see but still cannot recognize.

in formal evening wear (**no. 26k**)—echoes many of Rouault's depictions of fashionable couples out for an evening's entertainment, except that in this case their skeletal faces reveal the fragile ephemerality of fashionable high society.

The figure of Christ provides a curious yet telling comparison. Christ's head and torso (**no. 26l**) are diminutive, disproportionately small within the frame when compared to the portraits of Satan whose size cannot be contained. Ironically, Christ's outward appearance, easily misjudged by human perception, has none of the timeless, classical, Apollonian beauty of Satan. Rather, he calls to mind Isaiah's words describing the Suffering Servant: "he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him."[50]

Even more instructive is a comparison between the full-body *Satan IV* (**no. 26c**)—who would seem to be an acrobat or wrestler—and the two-thirds body of *Christ aux outrages* (**no. 26n**). Unlike Rouault's protagonist acrobats (cf. *Acrobates XIII,*

IV. 1922-1927: *MISERERE*: Genealogy and Contemporaries

By 1927, at age fifty-six, Rouault had completed what now constitutes the fifty-eight plates of the *Miserere* series.[52] Although he had shortened the title to a single Latin word in 1922 and eliminated the words *et Guerre* (and War), the series remains divided as a diptych. As published, plate numbers 1-33 constitute the *Miserere* (Mercy) section; numbers 34-58 constitute the *Guerre* (War) section.

The original title was a typical Rouault word-play, linking the work directly to yet another monument of French engraving by Jacques Callot: Rouault punned on Callot's *Les Misères de la Guerre* (The Miseries of War, 1633) to become *Miserere et Guerre*. Obviously, Rouault's play altered Callot's meaning in a fundamental way. By adding

a syllable to the French word *misère* (poverty, misery, or wretchedness) Rouault turned it into *Miserere*, the imperative mood of the Latin verb: have mercy on. While Rouault interrelates text and image throughout his work, a debt owed to the Symbolist milieu of the late nineteenth century, his covert allusion to Callot extends the genealogy of this text-image relationship back to the seventeenth-century *l'âge d'or* (golden age) of art and literature. Rouault evokes the epoch of Callot (and his great admirer, Rembrandt), of Molière and Racine whom Rouault read as a child.

For Callot, the subject of *Les Misères de la guerre* was not mercy but misery and his series is a bleak and deeply pessimistic one for a modern reader. In fact, "The realism in these pictures is so overwhelming that some authors attributed it as a kind of 'reportage' on the horrors of war."[53] Two plates in particular, representations of hanging bodies, seem to prefigure Rouault's unusual representation of the crucified Christ, which bears a legend taken from Pascal (for whom *misère* was a fundamental concept); *Jésus sera en agonie jusqu'à la fin du monde...*" (**no. 27ii**; cf. **no. 67**). The first is Callot's *The Hanging* (**fig. 10**) whose accompanying poem reads:

> Finally these ignoble and abandoned
> thieves,
> Hanging from this tree like ominous fruit,
> Show that crime (horrible and black spawn)
> Is itself the instrument of shame and
> vengeance,
> And that it is the fate of vice-ridden men
> To experience the justice of Heaven sooner
> or later.[54]

In this ghastly illustration, the captured enemies are hung from a single tree like so many pieces of fruit. A priest climbs a ladder to show a crucifix to a man about to die, offering him the chance of repentance and eternal salvation before he is executed. Although the event might be horrifying to a present-day reader, to the seventeenth-century imagination it was reassuring: virtue can be relied upon to triumph over vice; order is restored by legitimate authorities deploying gruesome and tortuous means.

Fig. 12. Francisco Goya, *Grande Hazaña! Con muertos!* (Heroic feat! With the Dead!)

A second illustration that emphasizes the human body's capacity for contortion is a depiction of *The Strappado* (**fig. 11**), an instrument of bodily torture as well as public spectacle (aimed at deterrence). The accompanying poem reads:

> It is not without cause that great captains
> Have well-advisedly invented these
> punishments
> For idlers, blasphemers,
> Traitors to duty, quarrelers, and liars,
> Whose actions, blinded by vice,
> Make those of others slack and irregular.[55]

Whereas Callot's texts were lengthy, Rouault's are brief, and it is very likely that he was inspired here by Francisco Goya's *Los desastres de la guerra* (Disasters of War), a nineteenth-century descendent of Callot's *Misères de la guerre*.[56] Produced between 1810 and 1820 as a response to Napoleon's military adventures in Spain, Goya's series was not published until 1863, a full thirty-five years after his death. The Napoleonic campaign and the Spanish defense was one of the most horrifying moments in history. As the set of eighty aquatint prints represents the shocking barbarism on the part of both the French invaders as well as the Spanish defenders, it would not have been well-received by a domestic populace that still remembered the trauma.

Fig. 13. Francisco Goya, *Al cementerio* (To the cemetery), Boston Public Library

Fig. 14. George Bellows, "Gott Strafe England" (God Punishes England) Boston Public Library

One of the most well-known (and most horrific) of Goya's plates is *Grande Hazaña! Con muertos!* (**fig. 12**) in which the bodily mutilation attested to by contemporary witnesses is depicted in terrifying detail.[57] The severed body parts faintly echo Callot's *The Hanging* as they too hang from the tree like fruit. Of particular interest with respect to Rouault is the middle figure strapped to the tree (again a faint echo of Callot's *Strappado*). Especially given the fervent Catholic religious energies fueling the Spaniards' resistance, the reference to crucifixion seems inescapable—the theme's variation here provided by the arms not being nailed to the two extended branches, but rather strapped around the trunk. Once again, the bodily contortion invites a comparison with Rouault's *Jésus sera en agonie* (**no. 27ii**; cf. **no. 67**).

A second of Goya's plates, *Al cementerio* (**fig. 13**), would seem to be Rouault's model for *Le juste, comme le bois de santal, parfume la hache qui le frappe* (**no. 27tt**). Although the positions of the figures have been reversed their postures are largely the same. As will be discussed below, Rouault's plate seems to be an homage to two realists—Goya and Manet—and at the same time, a symbolist transfiguration of the realist elements.

Family resemblances for Rouault's *Miserere* are found not only in its predecessors but also in contemporaneous works by at least two other artists, both of whom were also inspired by the Great War to produce engraved series. In a mere matter of weeks, George Bellows produced fourteen lithographs entitled *War (The Tragedies of the War in Belgium)* (1918), part of a concerted effort to mobilize American sympathy (formerly non-interventionist) for the Allies on whose side they had entered the war in April 1917.[58] Bellows's plates illustrated stories of German atrocities against the Belgians in the first months of the war in 1914.[59]

Bellows's *"Gott Strafe England"* (**fig. 14**) depicts a horrific scene in which Germans crucify captured English soldiers. The overall plan in which two soldiers have been crucified and are already hanging while a third soldier is on the ground being stretched out for the crucifixion seems meant to evoke the barbarity of Goya's *Grande Hazaña!* The faces on the horde of German soldiers surrounding the English soldier being held down call to mind similarly sadistic faces in works of Bosch. Most striking with respect to Rouault's *Jésus sera en agonie*, however, is the formal similarity between the crucified pose of Christ and the crucified poses of the two English soldiers.

On the German side, Otto Dix, a veteran of the trenches, produced his series of fifty prints after the war entitled simply *War* (1923-1924).[60] The series offers a superb example of the postwar German Expressionist movement of which Dix was a leader. The title of *Totentanz anno 17 (Hohe Toter Mann)* (**fig. 15**) explicitly evokes the medieval image of the *Totentanz* or *Danse macabre*. Although the archaicism is amplified using Latin to designate the year 1917, Dix leaves his intention ambiguous by not including the standard usage word "Domini" (*anno*

Fig. 15. Otto Dix, *Dance of Death, Anno 17* (*Dead Man's Hill*), 1924, 9 7/16 x 11 5/8 in. Harvard University Art Museums, Fogg Art Museum, Friends of the Fogg Art Museum Fund, M 12411. Imaging Department © President and Fellows of Harvard College

Fig. 16. Otto Dix, *Dead Soldiers in front of Emplacement near Tahure*, 1924, 7 9/16 x 10 in. Harvard University Art Museums, Fogg Art Museum, Friends of the Fogg Art Museum Fund, M 12442. Imaging Department © President and Fellows of Harvard College

Domini). Perhaps he wants to say that this horror could have nothing of the divine in it; or perhaps he wants to evoke the French Revolutionary calendar in an ironic way—i.e., beginning human history anew with "Year I," "Year II," and so on (here beginning with the twentieth century as *anno 1*), the Enlightenment's "regeneration" of humanity.

Whatever the title's meaning, Dix represents a dance of dead corpses arranged in circular fashion around barbed wire trench fences. Since traditional medieval iconography would have the figures linked together in a horizontal line,[61] Dix's innovative circular arrangement is very likely meant to be an ironic comment on Henri Matisse's *The Dance* (1909-1910).[62] Like Igor Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* (1913), Matisse's *Dance* was a prewar neo-Primitivist celebration of humanity at its most primal and instinctual, a humanity evocative of Rousseau's vision, one stripped of civilization's artifices.[63] But the experience of trench warfare would take what had seemed to be an innocent and exciting anti-bourgeois return to "nature" and transform it into horror. As early as 1916, one soldier could write from the trenches: "Confronted by the spectacle of a scientific struggle in which Progress is used to return to Barbarism, and by the spectacle of a civilization turning against itself to destroy itself, reason cannot cope."[64]

Dead Soldiers in Front of Emplacement near Tahure (**fig. 16**) is one of several plates in which Dix features skulls and skeletons, some of them with surfaces half-eaten by vermin and worms. This technique of peeling away outer layers in order to reveal the grotesque interior seems to be a self-conscious imitation of Hieronymus Bosch. Although different in style, Rouault's skeletons (**nos. 27dd, 27kk, 27vv, 27bbb**), heavily influenced by his work on Baudelaire's *Fleurs du mal*, offer striking parallels to Dix's and also suggest a common ancestry in the "Flemish primitives" (Bosch and Grünewald) important to both French and Germans genealogies of the "modern."

Rouault's *Miserere* both looked to the past and also had company in the present. Rouault inserted himself into the genealogy represented by Callot and Goya, but his idea of producing an engraved monument to the unprecedented horrors of modern warfare was contemporaneously shared by Bellows and Dix.[65]

VI. 1928: Ubu's Africa as Mystical Landscape

In 1928, twelve years of work came to completion with the printing of the plates for the illustrated folio edition of the *Réincarnations du Père Ubu*.[66] The text had already been published in 1925 (**fig. 17**) in a small edition without illustrations, presenting an affordable collection of Vollard's previous four publications: *Père Ubu à l'hôpital* (in the hospital, 1918) and *Père Ubu à l'aviation* (Père

Ubu Flying, 1918); *La Politique coloniale du Père Ubu* (The Colonial Politics of Père Ubu, 1919) with a cover image of Père Ubu singing by Rouault; and *Père Ubu à la guerre* (Père Ubu at War, 1923) with illustrations by Jean Puy. Rouault's illustrations would be published in the 1932 deluxe edition.

The word "reincarnations" had been Rouault's suggestion, yet another word play laden with multiple possible multivalent meanings. On the most obvious level it meant the several stories in which Père Ubu kept reappearing as principal character. But on other levels it evoked esoteric meanings: the incarnations of deities; reincarnations of souls; the multiple lives needed to work out bad karma; the problem of suffering and evil.

Three of Rouault's illustrations in particular suggest that he used the Ubu project to express interests he had in the esoteric, perhaps extending back to the year he exhibited at the final Salon de la Rose+Croix (in 1897, the year before Moreau died).[67] Just as Rouault transferred his penchant for satirical caricatures from grotesques to the colonial land of Ubu—compare *La Belle Hélène* with *Mademoiselle Irma* (**nos. 12** and **28o**) and *Superhomme* with *L'Administrateur colonial* (**nos. 19** and **28h**)—so too did his interest in the mystical migrate to a new means of expression in the mythical African land.

Fig. 17. Cover, Ambroise Vollard, *Réincarnations du Père Ubu* (Paris: Le Divan, 1925)

Rouault's clearest visual and textual reference would seem to be *Incantation* (**no. 28b**). He was obviously pleased with this image since he uses it twice, once as the frontispiece (**no. 28a**) and then later on in the series. However, while nearly identical in form the two stand out as inverted images in terms of color contrast—in the frontispiece the figure is white and in the later plate black. In both, the native figure's right arm is bent at the elbow and touching the head, a mirror variation of the female apparition in Felicien Rops's *L'Incantation* (1888; see fig. 5 in J. Michalczyk essay). But Rouault's "incantation" changes the elements: here it is not a seated magician who chants magic words and conjures up the apparition; rather, the native figure, posed as Rops's apparition, looks upwards and seems to chant into the vegetation from which figures organically emerge, either human or magical. However Rouault's *Incantation* is interpreted, it is more than a transference from symbolist esoteric Europe to mythical primitive Africa. In Europe, the scene is beyond the ordinary: a magician learned in the ways of the occult must open his ancient book and intone the proper formula. In Africa, the ordinary and extraordinary are indistinguishable: native persons and vegetation and perhaps even supernatural beings all participate in one organic swirling movement.

A second title that has to do with the esoteric and alchemy is *Cristal de roche* (**no. 28s**). After several centuries of waning interest in rock crystal, the late nineteenth century saw a rediscovery beginning with the *Exposition Universelle* held in Paris in 1889. (This exposition was also the site of the first Symbolist exhibition, organized by Paul Gauguin.) Frédéric Boucheron's *Chimera* vase "celebrated the renaissance of rock crystal." In the postwar period, pendants combining rock crystal with precious stones were created by the jeweler Georges Fouquet between 1920-1925. The most likely immediate source of inspiration for Rouault would have been the 1925 *Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs* for which Fouquet was president of the jewelry section. (In the 1925 manuscript of a letter to Dayot discussed above, Rouault explicitly refers to the Exposition.[68]) In the age of Art Deco, rock crystal was used "in preference to other materials for such accessories as cigarette cases, umbrella handles, and belt buckles, or for

utilitarian decorative objects like dressing table sets, office accessories, or jewel boxes."[69] Recent discoveries in the Rouault archives show that he cut out photographs from fashion magazines—including one in particular that is an advertisement for Boucheron (**fig. 18**). It is possible that Rouault has simply adorned his native African with a pendant created out of the most fashionable Art Deco stone and called her *Cristal de roche*.

However, given Rouault's predilection for layered meanings, he probably also intended to reference the ancient as well as the modern, the "rock crystal" which George Sand said represented the limit between "the Visible and the Invisible."[70] Rock crystal was thought in ancient times to be petrified ice, a product of both the greatest cold as well as of its diametrical opposite, the greatest heat.[71] The ancient Latin poet Roman Claudius wrote in his *Epigrams*: "This piece of ice bears the trace of its original nature; in part it has crystallized, but in part it has resisted the cold. It is a game or a trick played by winter...What cold cunning both froze and liquefied you, marvelous block? What secret heat protects the waters in your midst from Aquilon?... In what veins did this diamond become as hard as stone, retaining the fluidity of water because it was moved by inner heat though it froze me?"[72] Rouault would seem to be playing with this borderland of opposites, not only between visible and invisible, but also between the extremes of cold and heat—specifically, this "petrified ice" found in the hottest climes of Africa.

A third title linked to opposites as well as surrealism is *Le Poisson volant* (**no. 28u**). The image of the fish who flies—the identity of water and air—is at the heart of Alfred Jarry's "'Pataphysics," his system "beyond metaphysics." In the key "heraldic act" (the act in which medieval heralds discourse) of *Caesar-Antichrist* (1895) Jarry lays out his system. One of the four heralds addresses the Templar:

> The Pataphysician, axiom and principle of the identity of opposites (*axiome et principe des contraires identiques*), clamped on to your ears, and you, flying-fish (*poisson volant*), to your retractable wings, is the dwarf atop the giant, beyond metaphysics; he is, through you, the Antichrist and God as well (*l'Antéchrist et Dieu aussi*), hose of the Spirit, Minus-in-Plus, Less-which-is-More (*Moins-en-Plus, Moins-qui-es-Plus*), kinematics of the zero left in our eyes, polyhedral infinity...You are the owl, the sex and Spirit, hermaphrodite, you create and destroy (*le sexe et l'Esprit, hermaphrodite, tu crées et détruis*). Bounce on your poles, globe equal to the Earth, which you could drill right through to its depths, and before disappearing bless me with your supreme spittle, PLUS-IN-MINUS (*PLUS-EN-MOINS*).[73]

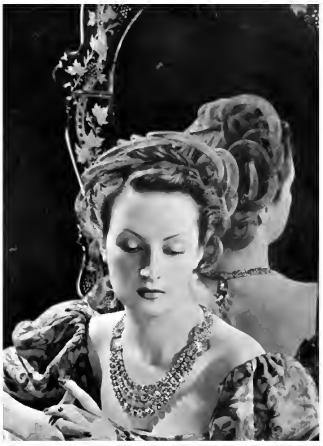


Fig. 18. Advertisement for Boucheron jewelry, press-clipping, Rouault's personal collection. Photo courtesy Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris.

In his *Exploits and Opinions of Doctor Faustroll, Pataphysician* (1897-1898), Jarry explains that the "plus" is male and the "minus" is female, and that these two either negate each other or impregnate one another—both in the end the same thing—and subsist only in their fruit which is zero. Jarry borrowed the principle of universal analogy from fin-de-siècle occultist thought, especially as laid out in

analogical tables by Papus (Dr. Gérard Encausse) in his *Traité élémentaire de sciences occultes* (1888).[74]

Active	Passive	Neutral
Positive	Negative	Equilibrium
+	-	∞
Father	Mother	Child
Sun	Moon	Mercury
Light	Shadow	Penumbra
Fire	Water	Air

It is precisely to lay out this system, says Jarry, that the Jesuit priest Father Ubu has written *Caesar-Antichrist*: "And regarding the dispute over the Plus sign and the Minus sign, the Reverend Father Ubu, of the Society of Jesus, former King of Poland, has produced a great book entitled *Caesar-Antichrist* in which can be found the only practical demonstration, by means of the mechanical engine called the *Physick-Stick*, of the identity of opposites (*de l'identité des contraires*)."[75] Significantly, Jarry himself boils down the basic function of the Ubu writings to laying out his "pataphysical" system of the ultimate identity of opposites.

Thus, in *Caesar-Antichrist*, the herald elaborates what he has already told the Templar:

> And often (there is no need to invoke here the identity of opposites) superabundance is a shortcoming. You have not understood your master who said: FOR HE THAT HATH, TO HIM SHALL BE GIVEN, thereby stressing the divergence of the two signs, but at the same time that one of them added to itself is cancelled out, and then becomes its opposite…The Plus sign will never fight against the Minus sign. As with every struggle, the possible outcome could only be annihilation—for each adversary is Infinity—of both principles, or their reconciliation.[76]

It is clear that Rouault's illustration of the flying fish comes from his interest in Jarry's fundamental text; in Vollard's text, nothing particularly singles out the flying fish just as nothing particularly singles out rock crystal. Vollard's text provides only bare contact points for Rouault's images which are explorations of his own many-layered interests.

Jarry's identity of opposites would have had appeals for Rouault that were, once again, both ancient and modern. Looking back in time, the concept of human being as the anxiety-ridden intersection point of both infinite being and absolute nothingness is central to Pascal's analysis of human limitations in knowledge:

> For, in the end, what is man in nature? A nothing compared to the infinite, an everything compared to the nothing, a midpoint between nothing and everything, infinitely removed from understanding the extremes: the end of things and their principle (*principe*) are hopelessly hidden from him in an impenetrable secret, equally incapable of seeing the nothingness from which he derives and the infinite in which he is engulfed.[77]

The relationship of opposites was also central to the surrealists. André Breton's first *Manifeste du surréalisme* (1924) was published along with thirty-two "automatic texts" (i.e., texts produced by "automatic writing") collected under the title *Poisson soluble* (The Water-Soluble Fish).[78] Water was one of the key images for the surrealists: running water was associated with automatic writing; unfathomable water symbolized the unconscious; flooding, especially urban flooding (and most especially the flooding of Paris, as in the great flood of January 1910) signified the liquidation of established order and of conventional values.[79] In sum: although the water-soluble fish is not identical with the flying fish, they both signify the identity of opposites. The water-soluble fish dissolves—negates its existence—in the environment essential to its existence; the flying fish symbolizes air, the alchemical offspring produced by the fecund mutual impregnation of fire and water.

Essays in the present volume explore the rich and many leveled aspects of the *Réincarnations du Père Ubu*, including Rouault's "sixteen-year-old-

obsession" with the project. Why would Rouault, especially in light of Suarès's stinging condemnation, have so thoroughly immersed himself in the project? One reason suggested by the flying fish, rock crystal, and incantation is Rouault's interest in anti-positivistic discourses, both in the fin-de-siècle (including symbolism, occultism, and alchemy) and in the postwar decade (surrealism). Père Ubu's Africa gave Rouault a mythical land in which he could continue to express not only his satirical wit but also his metaphysical—or perhaps pataphysical—musings. But the problem of opposites in borderlands and boundaries—colliding, co-existing, and sometimes hybridizing—was more than a theoretical problem for both Rouault and Vollard. For Rouault, opposites included being a working-class artisan trained in the upper-crust Academic environment of the Symbolists and the Salon; and being a religious believer in a largely unbelieving age. Vollard too occupied a place in borderlands, including being mixed-race, a speaker of both Creole and French (with an accent), perhaps homosexual, raised in the colonies and yet becoming one of the most successful (and feared) art dealers in the imperial capital of Paris.[80]

The *Réincarnations* is filled with the violence of the imperialists and vicious in its assault on society's esteemed leaders. It was fittingly written and illustrated by Vollard and Rouault, both of whom occupied margins, simultaneously outsiders and insiders of society. As Mary Douglas notes: "To behave anti-socially is the proper expression of their marginal condition. To have been in the margins is to have been in contact with danger, to have been at a source of power."[81]

VII. 1928: A Return to Painting

In 1928, the age of graphic shock was largely over. Rouault's long indentureship to Père Ubu had finally come to an end and he had suspended work on both the *Fleurs du mal* and the *Miserere* in 1927 for a number of reasons. He could now devote more time to painting with oil, and his canvases from now on throughout the next decade would be marked by an explosion in color. Partly this was a retrieval of the coloration he was known for in the days of the Fauves (cf. **nos. 6-10**). But partly, too, must have been the release from over a decade largely devoted to the creation of black and white engravings for illustrated book projects.

One of the first works produced was the stunning *Chanteuse à la plume blanche* (1928, **no. 31**). The practice of heavy black outlines that would become a Rouault trademark appears here, a habit acquired from a decade spent engraving plates whose luminosity depended entirely on the contrasting play between various blacks and shades of emptiness. (As he wrote to Suarès about the title page of the *Miserere*, "you know the importance and the [visual] play of empty spaces in typography."[82]) But it was also attuned to the expressionistic avant-garde of this epoch ambivalently suspended between "glitter and doom," sharing stylistic markers with work by painters like Max Beckmann.[83] Finally, it drew on Rouault's adolescent apprenticeship in stained-glass making, a device already seen in his 1911 depiction of Christ's baptism (**no. 17**). For this nightclub singer, the typical stained-glass contrast of cool blue with warm red has here been transformed into a dark purple passing almost imperceptibly into black. The overall effect is not grotesque but rather seductive, the richness of the reddish-purple conjuring the aroma of wine. As Baudelaire writes in the *Fleurs du mal* (which Rouault was illustrating at this same time), "The Soul of the Wine"

> sang by night in its bottles: "Dear
> mankind—
> dear and disinherited! Break the seal
> of scarlet wax that darkens my glass jail,
> and I shall bring you light and brotherhood!
> ...
> Listen to my music after hours,
> the hope that quickens in my throbbing
> heart;
> lean on the table with your sleeves rolled up
> and honor me: you will know happiness,...[84]

Given Rouault's immersion in Catholic symbolism, it is difficult not to associate the deep purple with its ritual marking of mourning and mortality. The intertwining of intoxicating beauty and

anticipatory grief by means of purplish wine would be thoroughly Baudelairean:

> Who has never known you, O profound
> joys of wine? Whoever has had a remorse
> to appease, a memory to evoke, a sorrow
> to drown, a castle in the air to build, all, in
> short, have called on you, the mysterious
> god hidden in the fibers of the vine. How
> splendid the great displays put on by wine
> are, and lit by the light of the inner sun!
> How genuine and fervent is that second
> youth which man can draw from it! But
> how fearsome too are its lightning bolts of
> pleasure and its debilitating charms.[85]

Against this backdrop of *Sturm und Drang*, the white plume startles the viewer with a bright lightning flash—a poetic of shock.

The nightclub singer is the ultimate postwar expression of Baudelaire's "fashionable" half of beauty and modernity, 1928 marking the high tide of "the time of the Boeuf sur le toit, of gin, Jazz and the Charleston, of the crazy white nights of the après-guerre."[86] And yet, the singer's wide open eyes also suggest Baudelaire's second element—the eternal. Her eyes seem transfixed by some distant vision:

> What is Purgatory, what is Hell
> to her? When she must go into the Night,
> her eyes will gaze upon the face of Death
> without hate, without remorse—as one
> newborn.[87]

A second painting (in India ink, oil and gouache) produced sometime between 1920 and 1929 is an undated study for the *Miserere* entitled *Ne sommes nous pas tous forçats?* (**no. 32**). The figure does not resemble the one that eventually became the *Miserere* engraving bearing this caption (**no. 27e**). Rather, it is the pose with arms stretched out overhead, descended from Michelangelo's "Dying Slave" and evoking Rouault's acrobats (cf. *Acrobates XIII*, **no. 18**), especially the contemporaneous *Être Dempsey* (1927-29, **no. 25**).[88] Cool coloration and voluminous forms reminiscent of Rouault's beloved Cézanne allow the viewer to regard this condemned *forçat* with aesthetic detachment. However, the figure stands as an exemplary expression of human anguish, a theme that was as early-modern as Pascal's *Pensées* and as ultra-modern as Heidegger's *Being and Time* (1927).

> When I consider the brief duration of my
> life absorbed in the eternity that lies before
> and after—The memory of a guest who
> stays only a day—the small space I occupy
> and can even see, engulfed in the infinite
> immensity of spaces I do not know and
> that do not know me, I am frightened and
> astonished to see myself here rather than
> there (*je m'effraie et m'étonne de me voir ici plutôt que là*); for there is no reason why I
> am here rather than there, why now rather
> than then (*ici plutôt que là, pourquoi à présent plutôt que lors*). Who has put me
> here? By whose order and direction have
> this place and time been allotted to me?[89]

In anticipating the indefinite certainty of death, Dasein opens itself to a constant threat arising out of its own "there" (*aus seinem Da selbst*). In this very threat Being-towards-the-end must maintain itself. So little can it tone this down that it must rather cultivate the indefiniteness of the certainty (*die Unbestimmtheit der Gewißheit vielmehr ausbilden muß*). How is it existentially possible for this constant threat to be genuinely disclosed? All understanding is accompanied by a state-of-mind. Dasein's mood brings it face to face with the thrownness of its "that it is there" (*vor die Geworfenheit seines "daß-es-da-ist"*)… For this reason, anxiety as a basic state-of-mind belongs to such a

self-understanding of Dasein on the basis of Dasein itself. Being-towards-death is essentially anxiety (*Das Sein zum Tode ist wesenhaft Angst.*).[90]

In spare cool Jazz Age blues, Rouault's *Ne sommes nous pas tous forçats?* captures this emergence of existentialist consciousness. In October 1929, the financial markets would collapse and inaugurate the Great Depression. Anxieties would escalate as totalitarian governments strengthened, war clouds gathered once again, and the post-war decade gave way to the inter-war.

Endnotes

1 Ernest Becker, *The Denial of Death* (New York: The Free Press, 1973) 51.

2 Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1995).

3 Letter of Rouault to André Suarès (27 April 1913), *Correspondance [de] Georges Rouault [et] André Suarès* (Paris: Gallimard, 1960) 49.

4 Michel Puy, *Georges Rouault: trente reproductions de peintures et dessins précédées d'une étude critique par Michel Puy, de notices biographiques et documentaires, et d'un portrait de l'artiste, par lui-même, gravé sur bois par Jules Germain* (Paris: Editions de la "Nouvelle revue française," 1921).

5 Puy 10; qtd. in Stephen Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism: Mystic Modernism in Postwar Paris, 1919-1933* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 2005) 233.

6 Letter of Suarès to Rouault (20 September 1919); in Rouault and Suarès, *Correspondance* 157. Translation from Thomas Epstein essay in this volume.

7 Letter of Rouault to Suarès (2 May 1922); in Rouault and Suarès, *Correspondance* 173; qtd. in Georges Rouault, *Georges Rouault, forme, couleur, harmonie,* catalogue published for the Musée d'art moderne et contemporain de Strasbourg exhibition, 10 November 2006 to 18 March 2007, commissariat Fabrice Hergott (Strasbourg: Musées de Strasbourg, 2006) 247. Suarès responded in a letter of 21 May: "Have no doubt about it, my dear Rouault: *Miserere* alone is the better title. You must keep it. The melange of Latin and French has always put me off (*m'a toujours déplu*)." Rouault and Suarès, *Correspondance* 173.

8 For further discussion see Schloesser, "Notes on the *Miserere* plates exhibited in *Mystic Masque*" in this volume.

9 For trauma, memory, and monuments, see Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 10-11, 331n31-35.

10 Michael North, *Reading 1922: A Return to the Scene of the Modern* (Oxford, 1999) 3.

11 Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 186.

12 Vincent Scully, *Architecture: The Natural and the Manmade* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991) 297.

13 For Baudelaire, see Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 11.

14 *L'Atelier Primavera et la décoration moderne, 1913-1923* (Paris: Magasins du Printemps, 1923) 20; qtd. in *Art Deco 1910-1939*, eds. Charlotte Benton, Tim Benton, and Ghislaine Wood (Boston and New York: Bulfinch Press, 2003) 91. Compare the ironic observation of Michael North: the "modern itself is an unstable category when the new, in literature and in fashion, comes into being in such close association

with the ancient." North 29; qtd. in Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 12.

15 Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 238-240.

16 Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 235-238. For Jacques Maritain see also Bernard Doering in this volume.

17 Georges Rouault, *Souvenirs intimes*, 2d ed. (Paris: E. Frapier, 1927) 99. The rue Victor-Massé is in Montmartre close to the red-light district of Pigalle. The newspaper vendors are crying out the names of papers across the political spectrum and Rouault has humorously chosen names that signify values. *La Liberté* was a moderate paper; *L'Humanité* was far-left (Communist); *L'Echo de Paris* (*L'Intran* was an abridged slang version meaning "the intransigent") was far-right. For an entertaining contemporary assessment of all the major newspapers of the day, see Raphael Levy, "The Daily Press in France," *The Modern Language Journal* 13/4 (January 1929): 294-303.

Rouault's use of language demonstrates his awareness of street-wise French as a humorous presentation on colloquial French from the period suggests: "*Le camelot crie hâtivement son seul mot: Presse! Echo d'Paris, raccourcit à deux syllabes: l'Intran. (Intransigeant). . . . Le charlatan sur son tréteau s'époumonne et s'étourdit soi-même, les écoliers discutent haut, les professeurs arrondissent leurs périodes, le poète dit ses vers, l'énergumène hurle et tempête, le cocher hèle sa haquenée, le politique insinue son idée: tout cela, c'est du français, même ce que je viens de dire! Mais 'c'est le ton qui fait la chanson.*'" Paul E. Jacob, "Le français tel qu'on le parle ou le beau français," *The Modern Language Journal* 12/2 (November 1927): 123-131, see p. 123.

18 Manuscript of a letter from Georges Rouault to Armand Dayot (September 1925), Boston Public Library, Rare Books Collection, Ms. Fr 32.

19 "Sur Gustave Moreau," a letter of Rouault to Suarès, *L'Art et les Artistes*, special issue devoted to Gustave Moreau (1926): 219-249.

20 "La Fontaine Cézanne à Aix-en-Provence," *L'Art et les Artistes* 20/61 (November 1925): 69. The same photograph was reprinted in yet another short notice about the fountain in the newspaper *Excelsior* (8 August 1925). A year later, André Salmon reported on the fountain in a short article entitled "[Un] monument Cézanne… et quelques autres,"*Paris-Matinal* (9 August 1926). Rouault turned the design into a painting eventually completed in 1938. See *Hommage à Cézanne*, OP 2134, reportedly dedicated to Cézanne in Rouault's hand on the reverse side. I am deeply grateful to Gilles Rouault for communicating these press clippings conserved in the Fondation Rouault archives, as well as this additional information on the fountain, all of which illuminate the significance of the Boston Public Library manuscript displayed in this exhibition.

21 Georges Rouault, "Chronique: Deux poèmes de Georges Rouault," *L'Amour de l'art* (1925): 445-446.

22 The Battle of the Yser river (in Belgium) took place in October 1914. It was known for the desperate action on the part of the king who opened the Yser Canal locks on October 25 and flooded the low country. The Germans were forced to retreat and shift their attention to Ypres. For the interwar production of monuments in this decade of bereavement and mourning, see Daniel Sherman, *The Construction of Memory in Interwar France* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1999).

23 A reference to Matthew 7:2: "For with the judgment you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get." *The Holy Bible containing the Old and New Testaments with the Apocryphal / Deuterocanonical Books. New Revised Standard Version* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1989). Hereafter NRSV.

24 English cannot capture Rouault's many poetic wordplays: in the French "*à la forme chérie évanouie dans la nuit*," "*chérie*" *and* "*évanouie*" rhyme; the syllables "*-nouie*" and "*nuit*" are homonyms.

25 Rouault, "Deux poèmes" 446.

26 Again, Rouault's rhymes are difficult to reproduce in English: *raté, situé, Miserere, avancés*, and *n'a jamais existé* all have endings that rhyme with one another; so do *chrétien* and *antediluvien*.

27 Rouault (1925), Boston Public Library, Ms. Fr 32.

28 See *De profundis* (1912), watercolor and pastel; in Hergott, *Forme, couleur, harmonie* 245.

29 See also the ironically titled *Impasse de la Justice* (Impass or Dead End or Blind Alley of Justice, 1910), OP 402.

30 For Rouault's love of the "vertical thrust" in architecture as well as dance, see Gael Mooney and Stephen Schloesser in this volume.

31 André Malraux's work shares key themes with Rouault's including a human desire to escape limitations and a yearning for fraternity to overcome solitude. See David Bevan, *André Malraux: Towards the Expression of Transcendence* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's Univ. Press, 1986). For Malraux on Rouault, see André Malraux, "Un homme qui 'est'. Notes sur l'expression tragique en peinture," *Formes* 1 (December 1929): 5-6; reprint in *XXe Siècle*, special issue "Hommage à Georges Rouault" (1971), 31-32; reprint in *Rouault: première période* 234-35; qtd. in Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 243-244.

32 Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 276-279.

33 Rouault, qtd. in Courthion (1962), English 73; French 79.

34 This is the title assigned by the catalogue raisonné: see François Chapon and Isabelle Rouault, *Rouault: œuvre gravé*, 2 vols. (Monte-Carlo: Éditions André Sauret, 1978) 1: 316 (legend #146); 1: 319 (figure #146). (The OG numbers are those assigned to Rouault's works in this catalogue raisonné.)

35 Psalm 136 (137): 1-4. Vulgate number is 136; NRSV is 137.

36 *Exode* is the title given in the catalogue published by Alan Wofsy, *Georges Rouault, The Graphic Work* (San Francisco: Alan Wofsy Fine Arts, 1976) 65. The variations in titles might arise from a painted variant of this plate: see *"Super flumina Babylonis" Exode (la route est longue)* OP 1712; and compare two other painted variants on the same cancelled plate, both entitled simply *Exode*: OP 1715 and 1716. For other Rouault works bearing the titles "Fugitives," "Exodus," and "Emigrants" (sometimes two titles applied to the same work), see OP 405, 406, 408, 409, 412, 418, 419. See also the chapter "Exode" as well as its accompanying reproduction of a painting from the 1900s-1910s in Georges Rouault, *Soliloques*, ed. Claude Roulet (Neuchâtel: Ides et Calendes, 1944), 191-197.

37 For correspondences with Daumier's fugitives see *Honoré Daumier; Georges Rouault* (Milan: Electa, 1983) 84-88.

38 Édouard Papet, "Fugitives," *Honoré Daumier, 1808-1879* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1999) 288-295, see p. 293n19. Like ancient ruins in general, Trajan's Column was a source of fascination and study in the nineteen century. See, for example, the recently reprinted replica edition of an 1874 work, John Hungerford Pollen, *A Description of the Trajan Column* (Boston: Ellibron Classics, [1874] 2001). For numerous detailed images of Trajan's Column see http://www.stoa.org/trajan/. Accessed 8 June 2008.

39 Henri Loyrette, "Fugitives," *Honoré Daumier, 1808-1879,* 296-301, see p. 301.

40 F. D. Klingender has written about Callot's beggars: "It was not only in the Netherlands that the *gueux*, the beggar, was the symbol of the people's struggle in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. To the splendour of the courts and churches he opposed the rags of destitution forced upon the masses wherever political and religious reaction prevailed. What the *gueux* was in the north, the *picaro* was in Spain and Italy: crafty and cynical, without illusions and pitiless to life as life was pitiless to him:—the symbol of the people." Klingender, "Les Misères et Malheurs de la Guerre," *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 81/473 (August 1942): 205-206, see p. 205.

41 Rouault's vision would be in line with that of Thomas Aquinas. "For Aquinas, untempered optimism—presumption—is a moral vice. Insofar as it is the 'anticipation of fulfillment' that has not yet arrived, it is untrue to the fundamental human reality — namely, the condition of being a pilgrim, always 'on the way,' the *status viatoris*. 'One who has comprehended, encompassed, arrived,' remarks Josef Pieper, 'is no longer a *viator* [pilgrim] but a *comprehensor* [possessor].' This *status comprehensoris* — the static arrest of movement and journey — is the 'proper antonym' of the *status viatoris*." Stephen Schloesser, "The Unbearable Lightness of Being: Re-sourcing Catholic Intellectual Traditions," *Cross Currents* 58/1 (Spring 2008); quoting Josef Pieper, *On Hope*, trans. Mary Frances McCarthy (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), 63-73; 11-12. For more on "self-satisfaction" and Rouault's work, see Roberto Goizueta in this volume.

42 "For Augustine, classical education and Platonist philosophy combine with Scripture to give *peregrinatio* the dominant sense of being away from where one wants to be. A *peregrinus* is not a pilgrim, a purposeful traveller in search of enlightenment, but is someone who feels foreign and wants to go home." Gillian Clark, "Pilgrims and Foreigners: Augustine on Travelling Home," *Travel, Communication and Geography in Late Antiquity: Sacred and Profane*, eds. Linda Ellis and Frank L. Kidner (Burlington: Ashgate, 2004) 149-158; see p. 154.

43 Plotinus, *Ennead* 1.6.8, trans. A. H. Armstrong (1962), qtd. in Clark 150.

44 Rouault, "Exode," *Soliloques* 191-197, see p. 196.

45 This edition of the *Fleurs du mal* was published in 1966, eight years after Rouault's death. The titles were not chosen by Rouault but rather by his daughters, Geneviève Nouaille-Rouault and Isabelle Rouault who "later justified their selection on the basis of their personal memories: 'Over the years we saw Baudelaire's *Petits Poèmes en prose* on his bedside table, long before *Les Fleurs du mal*. Our choice of poems was therefore guided by what our father himself told us: titles, rarely written down but heard hundreds of times, verses, that he loved to read to us again and again." François Chapon quoting Rouault's daughters, in Chapon and Rouault, *Œuvre gravé* 2:41.

46 See Susan Michalczyk in this volume.

47 See Soo Kang in this volume.

48 Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 166-167; 331n36.

49 Charles Baudelaire, "J'aime le souvenir de ces époques nues..." ("I prize the memory..."), Baudelaire, *Les Fleurs du mal*, trans. Richard Howard (Brighton, Sussex: The Harvester Press Ltd., 1982), English 15; French 193.

50 Baudelaire, "Le Masque" ("The Mask"), trans. Howard, English 27; French 205.

51 Isaiah 53:2. NRSV.

52 See Naomi Blumberg in this volume.

53 Originally the *Miserere* was supposed to consist of one hundred engravings. When Rouault was able to return to the project after the Second World War, the magnitude of the work required to rework the plates to a satisfactory degree forced him to leave behind the thought of finishing forty-two of these. For scholarly purposes, small versions of these refused plates along with their proposed accompanying legends have been reproduced in Chapon and Rouault, *Œuvre gravé* 1:316-319.

54 Bernd Roeck, "The Atrocities of War in Early Modern Art," *Power, Violence and Mass Death in Pre-Modern and Modern Times*, eds. Joseph Canning, Hartmut Lehmann, and Jay Winter (Burlington: Ashgate, 2004) 129-140, see p. 136.

55 Translation from *Callot's Etchings. 338 Prints*, ed. Howard Daniel (New York: Dover, 1974) n.p., plate 275.

56 Translation from *Callot's Etchings*, ed. Daniel n.p., plate 274.

57 Hilliard T. Goldfarb and Reva Wolf, *Fatal Consequences: Callot, Goya, and the Horrors of War* (Hanover, NH: Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, 1990).

58 One account from the diary of Captain Charles-François (1774/5-1853) reads: "I saw officers, soldiers, even women slit open from uterus to stomach, with breasts cut off, men sawn in half, others whose penises had been cut off and placed in their mouth; others buried alive up to their shoulders with their genitals in their mouth, and others hung by their feet inside of chimneys, their heads consumed by fire;... Brave General René,...who had just joined General Dupont's army with his wife and child, was captured in the gorges of the Sierra Morena [and]...cut in half in front of his wife, after having watched her being raped; then the child was cut in half before its mother, who was finally murdered in the same manner...." François qtd. in Rafe Blaufarb, *Napoleon, Symbol for an Age: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2008) 180.

59 George Bellows, *George Bellows and the War Series of 1918* (New York: Hirschl and Adler, 1983).

60 See Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 85-86. See also Jeff Lipkes, *Rehearsals: The German Army in Belgium, August 1914* (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven Univ. Press, 2007); John Horne and Alan Kramer, *German Atrocities, 1914: A History of Denial* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2001).

61 Antony Griffiths, Juliet Wilson Bareau, and John Willett, *Disasters of War: Callot, Goya, Dix* (London: South Bank Centre, 1998).

62 For the Lübeck *Totentanz* (ca. 1463) see http://www.dodedans.com/Etext.htm. For the Berlin *Totentanz* (ca. 1490) see http://www.dodedans.com/Eberlin.htm. Accessed 30 May 2008.

63 For Matisse's *The Dance* see the website of The Hermitage: http://hermitagemuseum.org/html_En/08/hm8802701.html. For the linkage between Dix and Matisse, see the National Gallery of Australia: http://cs.nga.gov.au/Detail.cfm?IRN=128600 Accessed 30 May 2008.

64 For an example of the prewar attraction to the "primitive," see Ernest Psichari's *Land of Sun and of Sleep* (1908); in Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 74-75.

65 Qtd. in Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 10.

66 This aspect is obscured because the work was not published until 1948. Since the plates of the *Miserere* had been produced by 1927 but (due to circumstances discussed below) were not published until 1948—after yet another world war—the series presents a problem in terms of interpretative context. The world in which it was privately produced was radically different from the one in which it would eventually be publicly received.

67 See Chapon, Chapon and Rouault, *Œuvre gravé* 2:63. See also Jody Blake, Marie Garraut, and John Michalczyk in this volume.

68 The Salons de la Rose+Croix (1892-1897) organized by Joséphin Péladan exerted an important influence on painters and aesthetics. See Michael Marlais, *Conservative Echoes in Fin-de-siècle Parisian Art Criticism* (University Park: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1992), 101-02, 139-140, 156. See also Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 39.

69 The fragments read: "appeared at the beginning of the Exposition des Arts Décoratifs—toward April May 1926 an ample enough article with reproduction of plates of my Miserere et Guerre—des Arts Décoratifs." Rouault to Dayot (September 1925), Boston Public Library, Ms. Fr 32.

70 Sylvie Raulet, *Rock Crystal Treasures. From Antiquity to Today*, trans. Janet Kabadayan (New York: The Vendome Press, 1999) 146-194, see pp. 149, 194.

71 Alain Boucheron, "Preface," Raulet, 6-7, see p. 7.

72 "It is a diametrically opposite cause to this [heat] that produces crystal, a substance which assumes a concrete form from excessive congelation. At all events, crystal is only to be found in places where the winter snow freezes with the greatest intensity...." Pliny the Elder, qtd. in John Bostock and Henry T. Riley, *The Natural History of Pliny*, 6 vols. (London: H. G. Bohn, 1855) 6:394; qtd. in Henry Cornelius Agrippa of Nettesheim, *Three Books of Occult Philosophy*, ed. and annotated by Donal Tyson (St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn, 1993) 24n2. Caron and Hutin add that because alchemists "grossly misinterpreted certain alchemical treatises, some of them were convinced

that a block of ice buried in the ground for a thousand years would infallibly turn into rock crystal; or that lead required only four periods of two years each to pass in successive stages from its primitive state to red arsenic, from this state to tin and finally to silver." Michael Caron and Serge Hutin, *The Alchemists* (New York: Grove Press, 1961) 78.

73 Raulet 16.

74 Alfred Jarry, *Caesar-Antichrist* (1895), in Jarry, *Adventures in 'Pataphysics*, trans. Paul Edwards and Antony Melville (London: Atlas, 2001) 142.

75 Gérard Encausse, *Traité élémentaire de science occulte mettant chacun à même de comprendre et d'expliquer les théories et les symboles employés par les anciens, par les alchimistes, les francs-maçons* (Paris: G. Carré, 1888) 60, 146; qtd. in Julien Schuh, "*César-Antechrist*: Un Écrin occulte pour Ubu," *Jarry: Monstres et merveilles*, ed. Patrick Besnier (Rennes: La Licorne, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2007-08), 13-45, see pp. 19-20, 31.

76 Jarry, *Gestes et opinions*; qtd. in Schuh 30.

77 Jarry, *Caesar-Antichrist* 142-143.

78 Pascal, *Pensées* Pléiade 185/Lafume 199/Sellier 230. Fragments of Pascal's *Pensées* are referenced according to their Pléiade / Lafuma / Sellier numbers. For Pléiade, see Pascal, *Oeuvres complètes*, 2 vols. (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2000), vol. 2; for Lafuma, see Pascal, *Pensées*, trans. A.J. Krailsheimer, rev. ed. (New York: Penguin, 1995); for Sellier, see Pascal, *Pensées*, ed. and trans. Roger Ariew (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2005).

79 André Breton, *Manifeste du surréalisme. Poisson soluble* (Paris: Éditions du Sagittaire, Chez S. Kra, 1924).

80 See entries for "Eau" (Water) and "Poisson soluble" in Jean-Paul Clébert, *Dictionnaire du Surréalisme* (Paris: Seuil, 1996) 225-228; 479. As Mircea Eliade writes: "In water everything is 'dissolved,' every 'form' is broken up, everything that has happened ceases to exist; nothing that was before remains after immersion in water, not an outline, not a 'sign,' not an event. Immersion is the equivalent, at the human level, of death at the cosmic level, of the cataclysm (the Flood) which periodically dissolves the world into the primeval ocean. Breaking up all forms, doing away with the past, water possesses this power of purifying, of regenerating, of giving new birth." Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, trans. Rosemary Sheed (London: Sheed and Ward, 1958) 194.

81 Jean-Paul Morel, *C'était Ambroise Vollard* (Paris: Fayard, 2007). For homosexuality, see the bizarre story of Éric Slomovic, 537-539, esp. 538n10.

82 Mary Douglas is analyzing the liminal status of novices. Douglas, *Purity and Danger. An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (1966; New York: Routledge, 2002) 98.

83 Hergott, *Forme, couleur, harmonie* 247.

84 Appropriately enough, it is presently owned by the Saint Louis Art Museum, home to the largest public collection of Beckmann. Beckmann taught at Washington University in Saint Louis after WWII. For "glitter and doom" see Sabine Rewald, Ian Buruma, and Matthias Eberle, *Glitter and Doom: German Portraits from the 1920s* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2006). See also *Max Beckmann and Paris: Matisse Picasso Braque Leger Rouault*, ed. Tobia Bezzola and Cornelia Homburg (St. Louis: The Saint Louis Art Museum, 1998).

85 Charles Baudelaire, "L'Ame du vin" ("The Soul of the Wine"), trans. Howard, English 113; French 291.

86 Charles Baudelaire, *On Wine and Hashish*, trans. Andrew Brown (London: Hesperus Press Ltd., 2002) 5-6.

87 Jean-Luc Barré, *Jacques et Raïssa Maritain: les mendiants du Ciel: biographies croisées* (Paris: Stock, 1995) 246; qtd. in Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 174.

88 Charles Baudelaire, "Allégorie" ("Allegory"), trans. Howard, English 132, French 310.

89 For this pose see Naomi Blumberg in this volume.

90 Pascal, *Pensées* Pléiade 64/ Lafume 68/ Sellier 102.

91 Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 1972) 265, 266; *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper, 1962) 310.

Notes on the *Miserere* plates exhibited in *Mystic Masque*

Stephen Schloesser

> My eyes account for less than one percent of the weight of my head; I'm bony and dense; I see what I expect...The point is that I just don't know what the lover knows; I just can't see the artificial obvious that those in the know construct... The vision comes and goes, mostly goes, but I live for it, for the moment when the mountains open and a new light roars in spate through the crack, and the mountains slam.[1]

For the exhibition *Mystic Masque*, twenty (out of the total fifty-eight) plates of the *Miserere* have been selected for exhibition. Although the series was not published until after the Second World War, all of the plates in the final publication had been printed by 1927. Since the images here chosen are mostly those emerging from Rouault's early-period influences, the series has been placed chronologically at the end of Rouault's 1920s graphic works, inserted between the *Fleurs du mal* (project suspended in 1927) and the *Réincarnations du Père Ubu* (printed in 1928, published in 1932). Even as these works are considered within the context of the late 1920s, however, it should be remembered that they were not publicly received until 1948 within an entirely new context of the postwar–Cold War era. Like Francisco Goya's *Disasters of War* from which it is descended—produced in the 1810s, published in 1863—the *Miserere* provides a fascinating case study of the differences between contexts of production and contexts of reception. Although *Mystic Masque* considers the series in a 1920s context, closer in time to the intellectual, artistic, and political circumstances evoked in its imagery, considering it within the Cold War period of its reception—the publication of the deluxe folio edition in 1948 and the publication of inexpensive facsimiles throughout the 1950s and early 1960s—would also yield strongly suggestive connections.[2]

I. Two Title Pages: *Miserere* and *Guerre*

The first two pieces exhibited are the plates that open each of the series' two main divisions: *Miserere mei, Deus, secundum magnam misericordiam tuam* (**no. 27a**) opens the *Miserere* section; and "*Les ruines elles-mêmes ont péri*" (**no. 27hh**) opens the *Guerre* (War) section. In both the folio and facsimile editions, these two plates are separated from one another by the intervening thirty-two and the interrelationship is

not immediately apparent. However, when viewed side-by-side, the two plates act as a diptych, each mirroring the other and yet each with significant differences. The words "Miserere" and "Guerre" are inscribed at the top of each plate, each with a style appropriate to the overall plate—neo-medieval on the one hand, neo-classical on the other. "Miserere" is written with a flourish as if this were a medieval manuscript; it can be compared to the script in Rouault's *Divertissement* (1943) (published five years prior to the final publication of *Miserere*) which is explicitly intended to imitate medieval illuminated manuscripts **(nos. 65a-o)**.[3] By contrast, "Guerre" is printed in unadorned stark capital letters matching the style of the plate as a whole—a representation of the 1920s postwar "return to order" that manifested itself in various ways as the "purism" of Le Corbusier, the "neo-classicism" of Cocteau, Picasso, and Stravinsky, the industrial-mechanical "tubism" of Fernand Léger, and various hybridizations of those approaches.[4]

Figs. 1a and 1b. Pages from Gilles Corrozet, *Hécatomgraphie*, an emblem book published in Paris in 1540 and reprinted in 1905, adorned at top by putti. Left: "All things are perishable." Right: "Underneath beauty lies deception." Photos: Stephen Vedder

The legends of each plate follow this same general distinction: *Miserere mei, Deus*, as has been noted above, is the first line of Psalm 50 (51), used in Catholic liturgical contexts for penitential seasons and in the office for the dead. (The original impulse for the *Miserere* was the death of Rouault's father in 1912.)

> *Miserere mei, Deus, secundum magnam misericordiam tuam.*
> [Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy great mercy.][5]

The caption for *Guerre* comes from the Latin poet Lucan (Marcus Annaeus Lucanus, 39-65), grandson of Seneca the Elder and nephew of Seneca the Younger.[6] His epic poem *De bello civili* (On the Civil War), usually known as *Pharsalia* (due to a mistranslation), is about the civil war between Caesar and Pompey.[7] Rouault quotes from this passage found in *Pharsalia*, Book 9:

> Devotee of fame, Caesar…takes a tour of charred Troy, that memorable name,
> and looks round for mighty traces of Phoebus' bastion.
> Woods now withering and trees with rotten trunks had
> crushed the abodes of Assaracus, had laced the Gods' temples
> with roots; all of Pergamum [i.e., Troy] now was choked with thorny
> thickets: everything had perished—even the ruins (*etiam periere ruinae*).[8]

Rouault most likely encountered Lucan via Voltaire's *Essai sur la poésie épique* (1733), which French readers took as "Voltaire's definitive statement on the modern European epic."[9] In his essay on epic poetry, Voltaire repeats an anecdote about Lucan's suicide that underscores the importance of *Pharsalia*: "Being condemned to death, he slit open his veins in a hot bath, and died reciting verses of

his *Pharsalia* which expressed the manner of the death according to which he expired."[10]

It seems worth noting that Voltaire's essay on epic poetry was first published not in French but rather in English as an *Essay upon the epick poetry of the European nations* (1727), and its companion piece was *An essay upon the civil wars of France* (1727), Voltaire's reflections on the Catholic-Protestant violence that put Henry of Navarre on the French throne. In both Lucan's original work and in Voltaire's coupling of his two essays, the theme is not merely war but *civil* war, the horror of a nation at war with itself and the totality of destruction. Voltaire highlights this himself in service of his anti-clerical agenda, explaining why, unlike the tales of Homer and Virgil which are about nations at war with their enemies, Lucan makes no place for the interventions of gods: "the civil wars of Rome," writes Voltaire, "were too serious for these imaginative games."[11] In choosing the passage from *Pharsalia*—all final decisions about the legends were made after 1945—Rouault may have thought of the three French-German wars of his lifetime as "civil wars"; he might also have been reflecting on his own birth at the end of the "civil war" of the Paris Commune.

Finally, the parallel of the figures in the "Miserere" and "Guerre" plates is suggestive. The upper half of "Miserere" might be the kind of comic mask that functions as a marginal corbel-head or capital in buildings derived from classical and Romanesque traditions.[12] Although the final version of the figure is serene with contemplative eyes and a mouth at peace, at least one of Rouault's painted variants has the face smiling, calling to mind a remark made by Ernst Kris: "the grinning gargoyles on Gothic cathedrals…intended to turn away evil…tend to become mere comic masks; by the fifteenth century the process is complete and, instead of threatening, they are intended to amuse."[13] In 1900, the vehemently anti-clerical Paul Richer had interpreted these corbel-heads as case histories of mental illness; in 1934, Hans Weigert interpreted the corbel masks at the Rheims cathedral as self-portraits of the artisan who made them.[14] It is possible that this is Rouault's self-portrait, his signature in stone as the artisan who constructed this monumental

Fig. 2. Rouault, illustrated final page of *Réincarnations du Père Ubu* (Paris: Ambroise Vollard, 1932), adorned at top by putto.

graphic work. But it should also be noted that this putto seems to imitate those hovering over decorative frameworks in Renaissance-style books. A Renaissance emblem book in particular, with its elaborate decor combined with succinct verses of classical wisdom—like the *Hécatomgraphie* of Gilles Corrozet (1540), made more easily available by its reprinting in 1905[15] (**figs. 1a,b**)—might have been an appealing model for the Miserere.[16] Like the emblem book, distinguished by its "combination of symbolic picture and epigrammatical conceit,"[17] the *Miserere* as originally envisioned was to have consisted of images by Rouault and accompanying poems written by Suarès. It is also worth noting that Rouault reproduces the same kind of putto image in the *Réincarnations du Père Ubu*, produced like the *Miserere* plates in the mid-1920s—only in *Ubu* it occurs on the final page, functioning even more likely as a signature (**fig. 2**).

The parallel figure in the upper half of "Guerre" is Veronica's veil, one of its five occurrences in the *Miserere*, here functioning as the center hinge linking two other plates. Immediately preceding it is the veil that ends the *Miserere* series, *et Véronique*

au tendre lin passe encore sur le chemin... (**no. 27gg**); thus it links together the end of *Miserere* and the beginning of *Guerre*. Immediately following the "Guerre" plate is an image of Christ crucified bearing a legend from Pascal: *Jésus sera en agonie jusqu'à la fin du monde..."* (**no. 27ii**), signifying that the war images that follow are the particular historical manifestations—Baudelaire's "forest of symbols"—of the one ongoing and eternal agony of Christ. (This is followed immediately by the heart-wrenching portrayal of a young soldier saying good-by to his father as he heads off to war (**no. 27jj**). The skeleton standing behind him leaves no doubt that he will not survive the trenches.) These plates express in various ways Rouault's central conviction: the visible world is the outward expression of unchanging invisible realities—the ongoing passion of Christ and the ongoing compassion of Veronica. This is made clear by the lower half of the plates which mirror one another: in "Miserere" it is Christ's bowed head; in "Guerre" it is the bowed head of a soldier's corpse. This is a symbolist's realist vision: the suffering and death of the soldier is the suffering and death of Christ.

II. Three Additional Plates with Veronica's Veil

Three other plates have been chosen to fill out the five instances in which Veronica' veil occurs. After the first two instances just discussed (**nos. 27gg** and **27hh**), the veil image next appears on the wall overlooking the scene in *Le juste, comme le bois de santal, parfume la hache qui le frappe* (**no. 27tt**). The plate was finished in 1926 and its legend became part of a poem Rouault composed around 1928:

> Jesus dies at every hour,
> The aromatic Sandalwood of the Cross
> Perfumes / embalms the universe [*embaume l'univers*]
> But humanity only believes in its misery [*sa misère*].[18]

Rouault plays on the verb *embaumer* here: it can mean to give out a fragrance or to perfume the air; but it can also mean "to embalm" a body. The identity of the body being carried in this plate is ambiguous: given the war context, it could be a soldier; given its clothing, it could also be a clown. More generally, it is the figure of the "just" person, a figure that runs throughout the Hebrew and Christian scriptures. Paradoxically, like the exotic sandalwood tree, when the body of the just one is cut down, it emits a perfume that both "embalms the body of the universe" and fills it with fragrance. But humanity, being completely preoccupied with its misery [*misère*], is incapable of discerning this ubiquitous fragrance.

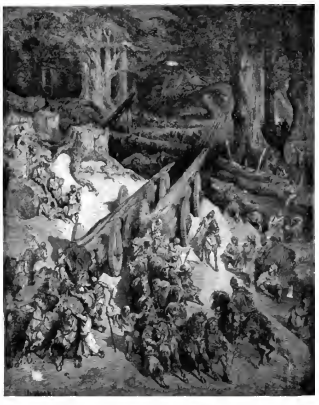


Fig. 3. "Cutting Down Cedars for the Construction of the Temple," from *The Doré Bible Gallery* illustrated by Gustave Doré (New York: Hurst, 1800-1899?) 38.

Rouault's levels of meaning here would seem to be multiple. In the Hebrew scriptures, sandalwood is the rare exotic import reserved for building the pillars of King Solomon's temple and palace, as well as the lyres and harps for the singers. The lines recalling its importation are embedded within the story of the visit of the Queen of Sheba, adding to the impressive list of treasures that came to Solomon.[19] Sandalwood is native to India—a favorite exotic location for symbolists (including Moreau). The illustrated Bible by the symbolist Gustave Doré (published 1866) featured two plates placed one after the other: "Cedars of Lebanon destined for the construction of the temple" and "Solomon

receiving the Queen of Sheba."[20] While the Queen of Sheba's visit evokes Gustave Moreau's orientalist decorations in *Salome Dancing before Herod* (1876) and even more *The Apparition* (1874-76), the illustration of the cedars is naturalist and epic in proportions, depicting the masses of men needed to cut down and transport the giant trees by sea to Jerusalem (**fig. 3**). In certain French translations (especially the perennially popular one by Louis Segond first published in 1874), "cedar" is translated as "sandalwood" (*bois de santal*).[21]

Fig. 4a. Georges Rouault, detail of "*The just, like sandalwood, perfume the axe that strikes them*" (**no. 27tt**).
Fig. 4b. Édouard Manet, detail of *Dead Christ with Angels* (cf. Schloesser "1871-1901," fig. 16).

It seems that Rouault has used this translation, interpreting the cut-down cedars as sandalwood used to provide the pillars for Solomon's temple in Jerusalem. His associating of the just one's body with the temple of Jerusalem is thoroughly scriptural: "Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.'... he was speaking of the temple of his body."[22] And there is a third "temple" with other "pillars"—that of Baudelaire's "Nature":

> The pillars of Nature's temple are alive
> and sometimes yield perplexing messages;
> forests of symbols between us and the
> shrine
> remark our passage with accustomed eyes.

All the universe would seem to be a "forest of symbols" whose correspondences with unseen reality might best be triggered or suggested by other senses:

> There are odors succulent as young flessh,
> sweet as flutes, and green as any grass,
> while others—rich, corrupt and masterful—
>
> possess the power of such infinite things
> as incense, amber, benjamin and musk,
> to praise the senses' raptures and the
> mind's.[23]

This *Miserere* plate offers an ideal example of Rouault's tendency to layer meanings in an imaginative collage. The body of the just one is all at once the body of a deceased soldier, clown, or Christ; Doré's gigantic cedars cut down in the forests of Lebanon; the exotic sandalwood brought from the east and dedicated to the pillars of the temple of Jerusalem; the temple of Nature whose pillars are alive, a forest of symbols with powerful scents like incense; the wood cut open that both perfumes and embalms the body of the universe.

Pictorially, too, the image is complex. On one level, as suggested above, it seems to reference Goya's *Al cementerio* (see fig. 13 in Schloesser, "1921-1929") from the *Disasters of War*. However, the replacement of the everyday Spaniards carrying the body with two angels on either side is almost certainly meant to reference Manet's 1864 *The Dead Christ and the Angels* (see fig. 16 in Schloesser "1871-1901"). In Rouault's version the two large angels are joined by a third small figure—angelic or human—whose sorrowful pose leaning rightward directly quotes Manet's angel on the right side of Christ (**figs. 4a, b**). This weeping figure would seem to be the humanity who cannot discern the perfume emitted by the felled just one, i.e., the humanity represented by Manet's painting, an artistic rendering of the positivist's incapacity to believe in the resurrection.[24] Although Rouault's small figure is preoccupied with *misère*, both the

angels as well as Veronica's veil on the wall point to a reality beyond what is seen.

The plate directly following *Le juste, comme le bois de santal* is horizontal, bearing the simple Latin title *De profundis...* **(no. 27ss)**. It too has Veronica's veil on the wall, hanging over the deceased who is now clearly a soldier. As these are the only two plates in the series with Veronica's veil on the wall, they would seem to have been intended as a pair, one vertical and one horizontal. The earliest legend for this plate helps explain the figures in the background, that is, behind the wall upon which hangs the Holy Face:

> Austere politicians
> with bitter rhetoric
> console mothers.[25]

Isabelle Rouault has noted that this helps us discern in the left background "a man standing upright in the process of discoursing." Rouault's original understanding of the plate then becomes clear: as the body of the deceased unknown soldier lies in the foreground with Veronica's veil keeping guard overhead, a politician with bitter rhetoric "consoles" the mother.

In the end, however, Rouault preferred the simpler title *De profundis* "which puts the accent on the unknown soldier in the foreground."[26] *De profundis* are the first two words of Psalm 129 (130), used in Catholic offices for the dead.

> *De profundis clamavi ad te Domine: Domine exaudi vocem meam.*
> Out of the depths I have cried to you, O Lord: Lord hear my voice.

The posture of the deceased body in this plate is a mirror image of that in *De profundis* (1912), a watercolor and pastel drawing Rouault made on the death of his father.[27] "It is following the death of my father," Rouault wrote Jacques Rivière, "that I made a series entitled *Miserere* in which I believe to have put the best of myself."[28] This plate reminds the viewer that the origin of the series was not originally in war but in the very personal death. By putting the body of a soldier at its center, familial grief is universalized to the broader loss in war, suggested by the barely visible distraught figures in the room behind the wall.

The fifth and final plate featuring Veronica's veil—*"C'est par ses meurtrissures que nous sommes guéris."*—is the very last one of the *Guerre* section and hence of the entire series, making for symmetrical beginnings and endings with the *Miserere* section (**nos. 27gg** and **27fff**). The images for both are dated 1922, the year used by curators of the unfinished works to divide the "Holy Face" works that pre-date the completed *Miserere* numbers from those produced afterward (i.e., between 1922-1939. **nos. 75-77**). It would seem likely that, when Rouault reworked these plates concluding the two sections in preparation for the 1948 publication, he altered the eyes in both. Whereas the eyes tend to be open in earlier versions, they are closed and become more contemplative after 1930. (This inward turn is also true of other 1930s works: the three depictions of Christ in *Passion* (1936); *Christ et Docteur* (1937); *L'Italienne* (1938); *Le Clown blessé* (1939) **(nos. 47b-d, 53, 55, 62)**. Another marked addition in the two nearly identical *Miserere* plates is the emphasis placed on the crown of thorns, explicit in both but especially pronounced in the last of the *Guerre* section. In the pre-1922 versions **(nos. 71-72)**, Christ has wide open eyes and a simpler outlined face—one more reminiscent of the 1902 published Shroud image. In the 1922-1939 versions, Rouault takes pains to add and accent thorns (which presumably would not have been associated with the Shroud; it is not associated with Christ alive on the road meeting Veronica, but rather with his corpse after death). The thorns here are especially frenzied and tangled, evocative of barbed wire, so as to underscore the paradox of the title's claim about wounds or bruises: "It is by his wounds (*meurtrissures*) that we are healed."

The passage first occurs in the Hebrew scriptures and it is an ideal example of dramatic irony. The prophet Isaiah writes that the trials undergone by the Suffering Servant are mis-judged by onlookers. Just as Job's many afflictions were mis-judged by his theologian-friends to be just punishments for someone not being a "just one," so too this Suffering Servant figure is mis-judged: "we accounted

him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted." Similarly, just as Job insists that he is a "just one" and that his sufferings are eventually revealed as not a price being paid for transgressions, so too Isaiah reveals that his Suffering Servant is the victim of gross misjudgement. Even more so—and this makes the irony even more dramatic—not only have the Suffering Servant's afflictions been misjudged as due to his faults; rather, the faults for which he has undergone punishment belong to the onlookers themselves. His sufferings have been vicarious suffering for others, a theme central to the thought of both Huysmans and Bloy.[29]

> *Mais il était blessé pour nos péchés, Brisé pour nos iniquités;*
> *Le châtiment qui nous donne la paix est tombé sur lui,*
> *Et c'est par ses meurtrissures que nous sommes guéris.*
> But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities;
> upon him was the punishment that made us whole,
> and by his bruises we are healed.[30]

Isaiah's words are appropriated by the New Testament, and here the problem of correct judgment is amplified. Saint Peter writes about Christ abused: "When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly (*à celui qui juge justement*)."[31] In the following verse, a connection is made with the plate discussed above regarding the body of the just as analogous to sandalwood: "He himself carried up our sins in his body to the tree (*en son corps sur le bois*), so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed (*lui par les meurtrissures duquel vous avez été guéris*)."[32] The quotation from Saint Peter links the paradox of the veil (wounds do the healing) with the paradox of the tree (its being struck open is the violence that releases the perfume).

One might expect, given Rouault's fastidious attention to details and symbolism, that the structure of the *Guerre* section reflects these connections. He does not disappoint. There are twenty-five plates in *Guerre* (numbers 34-58 in the overall series); the first twelve plates (34-45) both begin (*"Les ruines elles-mêmes..."*, **no. 27hh**) and end (*"Le juste, comme le bois du santal..."*, **no. 27tt**) with Veronica's veil; the second thirteen plates (46-58) also begin (*De profundis*, **no. 27ss**) and end (*"C'est par ses meurtissures..."*, **no. 27fff**) with Veronica's veil. *De profundis*, with twelve plates on either side, is the exact mid-point of *Guerre*, its literal center of gravity. Finally, as noted above, the *Miserere* section is linked to the *Guerre* section as a whole by its final plate: *et Véronique au tendre lin passe encore sur le chemin...*" (**no. 27gg**). The *Miserere* section both begins and ends with mercy.

III. Triptych: Reviled Jesus takes Refuge in the Barefoot Wanderer

In addition to the two title plates and the four other plates with Veronica's veil, *Mystic Masque* has fourteen additional plates for display.

The first two plates—*Jésus honni...* and *se réfugie en ton coeur, va-nu-pieds de malheur.*—are the two wings of a triptych, the middle plate being *toujours flagellé...* (**nos. 27b, 27c**) The ellipses used in the legends are Rouault's own, indicating that the poetic phrases continue and that the plates are to be connected. This small poem reads:

> Jesus mocked [*Jésus honni*]...
> forever scourged [*toujours flagellé*]...
> takes refuge in your heart [*se réfugie en ton coeur*],
> oh barefoot waif of misfortune [*va-nu pieds de malheur*].[33]

The connections between the figures make clear Rouault's incarnational (or sacramental) vision and his intention to paint the human condition as a mystic masque. In the first plate we see only the bowed head, a profile view of what will later be titled *Ecce dolor* (1936, **no. 47c**), a medieval figure. The figure emerges directly from that in the bottom half of the preceding plate, *Miserere mei, Deus* (**no. 27a**). In the plate that follows, the artist pulls back

and we see three-quarters of Christ's full body, "forever scourged." This figure will soon reappear both as a condemned criminal (**no. 27v**) and as Isaiah's Suffering Servant (**no. 27y**).

If Rouault's interest were purely historical, the viewer would expect to see Christ from yet another angle. However, Rouault's interest being incarnational or sacramental, Christ becomes identified with the wayfarer—the "*va-nu-pieds*," literally translated as going along without shoes and being equivalent to the words beggar, vagabond, tramp, or bum (*clochard*). The image of the homeless wanderer is a favorite of Rouault's, and owes its lineage to Callot's beggars (see fig. 9 in Schloesser, "1921-1929") and "Bohemians" (or gypsies) (see fig. 4 in J. Michalczyk essay), in Daumier's fugitives, emigrants, and traveling Saltimbanques and in Manet's gypsies (see fig. 11 in Schloesser, "1871-1901"). Other examples Rouault's wanderers include his small families in *La Petite banlieue* and in *"Super flumina Babylonis,"* the barefoot figures in *Passion*—the fishmeran, peasants, vagabond, old man, and executioner—and the entire troupe of the *Cirque de l'Étoile filante*, the whole book devoted to the wandering circus (**nos. 45a–q**).

Finally, the form of the triptych allows Rouault to engage in his love for surprising (and often shocking) inversions. As the viewer moves through the series, turning over one page of the folio after another, two images of Christ in succession lead the viewer to expect an exalted subject. At this moment Rouault unexpectedly inserts society's most marginal type—the homeless person—and makes the wanderer the re-incarnation of Christ: an upending inversion as the most powerful "takes refuge in" (*se réfugie*) the heart of the most vulnerable.[34]

IV. Diptych/Triptych: Identity of Opposites

Another triptych constitutes the heart of the *Miserere*. The question and answer form linking two plates—*Ne sommes-nous pas forçats?* and *nous croyant rois.* (note the question mark concluding the interrogative and the lower-case response acting as a modifying participle)—suggests they should be seen as a diptych. But when the legend for the third following plate is added, the three lines are seen to be a short rhyming poem:

> *Ne sommes-nous pas forçats?*
> *nous croyant rois.*
> *Qui ne se grime pas?*
> Are we not slaves?
> believing ourselves kings.
> Who does not wear a mask?

Rouault would have encountered the term *forçat* in Dostoevsky. His first letter to André Suarès (dated July 1911) related that he was in the middle of reading *Crime and Punishment*.[35] (One year earlier, Suarès had completed writing his chapter on Dostoevsky, judging him to be "the deepest heart, the greatest conscience of the modern world."[36]) The epilogue begins ominously: "Siberia… In this prison had been confined, for nine months, the man condemned to forced labor (*le condamné aux travaux forcés*)…"[37] If Rouault had been moved to go on and read Dostoevsky's earlier *Memoirs from the House of the Dead* based on Dostoevsky's own time spent in prison as a forced laborer, he would have encountered the term *forçat* immediately and more directly:

> Our prison stood at the edge of the fortress, right next to the ramparts… Here was our own laws, our own dress, our own manners and customs, here was the house of the living dead [*une maison morte-vivante*], a life like none other upon earth, and people who were special, set apart… These are the barracks. Here the convicts live [*Là vivent les forçats*]…[38]

From then on, the word *forçat* occurs innumerable times throughout the work as the equivalent of "convict." Curiously, Dostoevsky links life in prison to life in a palace. "Your palace is enclosed by a fence, and you'll be told: everything is yours, delight in it! But only do not go one step away from here! And believe me at that same moment you'll want to be rid of your paradise and to step over beyond the fence."[39] Liberty is set in opposition to this "gilded cage," and soon "the image of

the 'palace' will be imbued with a new idea content: every compulsory, rationalized organization of society, every utilitarian 'paradise on earth' purchased at the price of freedom, be it Fourier's phalanstery or a communistic commune—all this is a 'house of death,' a palace enclosed by a fence."[40]

Long before reading Dostoevsky, however, Rouault might very likely have seen the connection between the *forçat* and kingship when he was a boy first reading Voltaire's *Candide*. In chapter 27, having just eaten with six dethroned kings, Candide boards a Turkish ship. The dialogue begins with reflecting on how common is the reversal of fortune: "No one ever before saw six dethroned Kings dining together in an inn or even heard of such a thing," says Candide. Martin replies: "It is very common for Kings to be dethroned. And as for the honor we had to dine with them, that is a trifle unworthy of our attention." Candide's former valet happens to be on the ship and reveals that both he and Cunegund have also undergone severe reversals of fortune, becoming enslaved to Turks who have themselves been dethroned: "She's a slave in the household of a former Sovereign (*elle est esclave dans la maison d'un ancien souverain*)…and I am a slave of the dethroned Sultan (*et moi je suis esclave du sultan détrôné*)."[41]

As the narrative progresses, Candide notices two galley slaves (*forçats*) who row very badly—*deux forçats qui ramaient fort mal*—and thinking of his former companions, he is overwhelmed with grief and compassion. Suddenly, the two rowers hear their names mentioned and give a great cry (*Au nom du baron et de Pangloss les deux forçats poussèrent un grand cri*). Candide pays the Turkish captain to liberate his two friends from slavery and they then go off to deliver Miss Cunegund from slavery as well. The chapter is a wonderful example of the vicissitudes of fortune: today kingship, tomorrow slavery. That Rouault consciously thought in terms of this pair is demonstrated in a line from his 1912 *Miserere* notebook: "*Il n'y a plus de galère ni de roi…*" ("There is no more galley nor king…").[42]

Rouault would also have encountered the paradoxical connection between slavery and kingship in Alfred Jarry's *Ubu Enchaîné* (Ubu enchained or Ubu enslaved), the sequel to *Ubu Roi* (Ubu the King). As noted above in the discussion of the *Réincarnations du Père Ubu*,[43] Jarry's system of "'Pataphysics," drawing on late-19th-century esoteric ideas of alchemy, embraced the identity of opposites. Throughout *Ubu Enchaîné*, Jarry plays with the concepts of freedom and slavery, as when Père Ubu is condemned by the court to serve as a galley-slave:

> JUDGE: The Court condemns Francis Ubu, known as Père Ubu, to penal servitude for life as a galley-slave. He is sentenced to have a ball and chain fastened to each ankle while in prison and then to be sent to join the first available shipment of convicts (*au premier convoi de forçats*) for the galleys of Soliman, Sultan of the Turks.
> – The Court condemns his accomplice, known as Mère Ubu, to be fitted with one ball and chain, to suffer solitary confinement for her life in her prison.
>
> PISSWEET AND PISSALE: Hurrah for freedom (*Vivent les hommes libres*)!
>
> PÈRE UBU AND MÈRE UBU: Hurrah for slavery (*Vive l'esclavage*)![44]

Later, Pissweet leads "The Free Men" (*Les Hommes Libres*): "Forward, comrades! Hurrah for freedom!… We are free to do what we want, even to obey. We are free to go anywhere we choose, even to prison! Slavery is the only true freedom (*La liberté, c'est l'esclavage*)!" The Free Men in chains order Ubu to surrender:

> PISSWEET: Surrender, Père Ubu! Hand over your iron collar, manacles and chains! Be free (*Soyez libre*)! We're going to strip you stark naked and show the world what you look like without your jewelry (*On va*

vous mettre tout nu, dans la lumière)![45]

In the end, the Turkish Sultan reveals to his vizier that Ubu is his long-lost brother who had been abducted by French pirates—thus, a monarch who has been dethroned several times over. The Sultan doesn't want this revealed to Ubu but rather wants him out of the country before he gobbles up his fortune. Ubu is put on the boat and, along with "all the characters who have appeared during the play, [is] chained to the benches as galley-slaves (*tous les personnages qu'on a vus dans la pièce enchaînés aux bancs des forçats*). As the *forçats* sing an absurd song while rowing the sea—"Let's mow the great meadow with sweeps of our scythes!"[46]—Père Ubu is asked whether he would like to take command of the ship.[47]

> Père Ubu: Oh no! Even though you've chucked me out of this country and are taking me God knows where as a passenger in this galley, I still remain Ubu Enchained, Ubu slave (*Ubu enchaîné, esclave*), and I'm not giving any orders ever again. That way people will obey me all the more promptly.[48]

In the context of Jarry's 'Pataphysics, the union of freedom and slavery—the Plus and the Minus—produces the negation of each or, conversely, infinity.

Rouault transforms the farce into the tragicomic human condition. Like the grinning Ubu watching over his back,[49] we dress ourselves in royal robes and headgear. But looking over his shoulder Ubu sees himself mirrored, completely naked—*tout nu*—a convict, galley-slave, forced laborer. It is, as Pascal writes, a problem of imagination and knowledge.

The triptych is filled out, then, by the tragic clown, one of Rouault's most powerful images, both here and in its variant painted sometime after 1930 (**no. 40**). The verb *se grimer* means to paint one's face in order to perform; by extension, it also means to disguise or mask oneself. The clown's rhetorical question broadens King Ubu's particular mask into a more universal condition: "Who does not apply face paint? wear a mask? disguise oneself? The question can be traced back to Rouault's 1905 encounter with the old vagabond clown, itself modeled on the experience of *dèdoublement* narrated in Baudelaire's prose-poem, "The Old Acrobat."[50] "I saw quite clearly that the 'Clown' was me, was us, nearly all of us," Rouault had written nearly two decades earlier. "This *rich* and *glittering* costume, it is given to us by life itself, we are all *more or less clowns*, we all wear a glittering costume…(emphases are Rouault's)."[51]

The difference in types, then, transcends the flexibility or rigidity of bodies and points to a deeper unseen division: a difference in knowledge and judgment. Rouault's protagonists are fully aware of the disjunction between semblance and reality while his antagonists act out their lives in self-deception.

V. Triptych/Tetraptych: Judgments and Justice

Another triptych (**nos. 27v, 27w, 27x**) brings us from the circus tent to another of Rouault's trademark contexts: the courtroom. The plates' legends (which rhyme in French) are extracted from Rouault's verses in *Paysages légendaires* (Fabled Landscapes, 1929). Once again, the ellipses are Rouault's, signaling the connections between the plates:

> The condemned man went away…
> his lawyer, in hollow phrases, proclaims his total innocence…
> beneath a Jesus on the cross forgotten there.[52]

In the first plate, the figure of a condemned man calls to mind the center image in the series' first triptych, *toujours flagellé* (**no. 27c**). The figure plays like a leitmotif in the overall music of the composition, functioning as Milan Kundera writes:

> It returned again and again, each time with a different meaning, and all the meanings

> flowed through [it] like water through a riverbed. I might call it Heraclitus' ("You can't step twice into the same river") riverbed: [it] was a bed through which each time Sabina saw another river flow, another semantic river: each time the same object would give rise to a new meaning, though all former meanings would resonate (like an echo, like a parade of echoes) together with the new one.[53]

Even as the condemned man resonates with Christ "still flagellated" and with the *va-nu-pied* in whose heart he takes refuge, he adds his own layer of new meaning to the parade.

His lawyer is drawn directly from the pages of Daumier—compare the upward-turned nose in *Vous avez perdu votre Procès...* (April 1848, see fig. 12 in Schloesser, "1871-1901"). It is the same "unconsciousness," innocence, or lack of any responsibility for the judgment of guilt arrived at by the judges. The third plate intends multiple meanings. The most literal meaning is historical: in 1905, one of the provisions of the Act of Separation of Church and State was the removal of crucifixes from courtrooms. (Daumier's courtrooms always have the large crucifix looming over the judges' heads, even when they are falling asleep out of disinterest.) On this literal level the meaning is: there is no crucifix where there used to be one. On a deeper level, Rouault plays on the lawyer's "unconsciousness" (*inconscience*). While he claims not to be conscious of any complicity he might have had in the judgment handed down, he is also not conscious of the higher authority or principle that is judging the proceedings, whether the players in this masque are aware of it or not. On yet a third level, Rouault has curiously altered the normal French usage for "crucifix"—i.e., *Christ en croix*—by substituting the more familiar and devotional "historical Jesus." The slight word change alters the meaning significantly: rather than mean "beneath a forgotten crucifix" it conveys the living personal sense implied in **(no. 27ii)** whose legend is taken from Pascal: Jesus (quite literally) will be in agony until the end of the world—and he is in agony in this condemned man here in front of the lawyer.

As if to make this almost redundantly clear, the reader turns the page and encounters yet a new resonance in the semantic river. The lack of ellipses seemed to indicate that the triptych was the end of this episode; yet the surprise comes in the bodily configuration **(no. 27y)**, a nearly exact echo of the condemned man, and a clear reference back to *toujours flagellé* as well **(no. 27c)**. The legend is a direct quotation from Isaiah 53, the Suffering Servant passage already seen: "He was oppressed and afflicted yet he opened not his mouth."[54]

In terms of the connections between poetic phrases, this grouping is a triptych. But the near-exact bodily arrangements of the condemned man and Christ as the Suffering Servant expand the episode into a four-paneled polyptych. Like early-modern polyptychs (e.g., Matthias Grünewald's Isenheim altarpiece), Rouault's *Miserere* plates—whether in a deluxe folio edition or in inexpensive bound facsimile editions—can function as altarpiece wings. When a wing is "shut," a diptych or triptych can mean one thing; when a wing "opens," another layer of meaning is added: a diptych becomes a triptych, a triptych becomes a tetraptych, and semantic reverberations multiply.

VI. Symbolist Suffering

The remaining five plates exhibited in *Mystic Masque* are not essentially parts of larger groups and could be considered singly as individuals. However, I will consider them under three categories: symbolist suffering; blindness; and "land's end."

Just as the two title-page plates for the *Miserere* and *Guerre* sections construct a Christian-Classical comparison, so too do two plates that depict human suffering as something that penetrates into or points beyond what can be seen. The Christian plate is one already considered above: *Jésus sera en agonie jusqu'à la fin du monde..."* **(no. 27ii)**. The quotation is from Pascal's *Pensées*: meditating on Christ's agony in the garden, sweating drops of blood while his followers fall asleep, Pascal writes, "Jesus will be in agony until the end of the world. We must not sleep during that time."[55] In the series, this plate is followed immediately by *Ca*

sera la dernière, petit père! (**no. 27jj**), a heart-wrenching scene in which a youth says farewell to his "papa" for the last time as he goes off to war. The skeleton behind him leaves no doubt as to the young soldier's fate. The sequence of the plates suggests that Rouault intended to lay out a general symbolist vision of suffering in the world—i.e., the sufferings that we sensibly perceive are outward manifestations of the one ongoing (invisible) agony of Jesus—and then immediately give a concrete application—i.e., the soldier's bidding farewell to his father.

The plate was produced in 1926 and its painted variant (**no. 63**) sometime after 1930. There are a number of crucifixions in the work of Rouault and they all tend to follow a more traditional pose with arms outstretched horizontally (**nos. 27x, 27ee, 27eee**). This plate and its variant stand out for their unusual pose with arms stretched out overhead and the cross itself suggested but not seen. It is possible that Rouault means to associate the presence of Christ in the world's ongoing agony with the Christ raised from the dead. Christ's bodily arrangement at the moment of resurrection, depicted in one of the original 100 *Miserere* plates (but not published at the end for lack of time)—*En tout coeur bien né, Jésus encore ressuscite* (In every heart born well, Jesus rises again, **fig. 5**)—closely matches that of Christ in agony.[56] The legends for each plate express the same concept: within the human heart, in times of agony or simply well-born, it is Christ imminent who both agonizes and rises. Perhaps Rouault's own religious understanding intuited what has been laid out more systematically by theologians, namely, that the moment of Christ's crucifixion is identical with the moment of his glorification. Hans Urs von Balthasar states this position succinctly:

Fig. 5. Georges Rouault, *En tout cœur bien né, Jésus encore ressuscite,* n.d., intaglio, 23 1/5 x 15 in. Collection of Robert and Sandra Bowden

> Our task…consists in coming, with [the gospel of] John, to see [Christ's] "formlessness" ("*l'absence de figure*")…as a mode of his glory because a mode of his "love to the end," to discover in his deformity (*Ungestalt* [*dans ce qui est défiguré*]) the mystery of transcendental form (*Übergestalt* [*le mystère de la superfigure*])…his being made sin for us is understandable only as a function of the glory of love…pure glory…is always but a function of its opposite.[57]

Pictorially, it is also worth noting the similarities in form between *"Jésus sera en agonie..."* and the hanging or suspended bodies in Callot's *Misères de la guerre* and Goya's *Los desastres de la guerra* (see figs. 10-13 in Schloesser, "1921-1929"). The closest and most horrifying parallel is Bellows' *Gott strafe England* (see fig. 14 in Schloesser, "1921-1929") from *The Tragedies of the War in Belgium* (1918). Especially given the close association of French Catholics and the German atrocities in Louvain, it is very likely that Rouault would have seen Bellows' work.[58]

The other half of this Christian-Classical comparison is Rouault's depiction of Orpheus and his lyre, *Sunt lacrymae rerum...* (**no. 27z**). The original verses for this plate more specifically alluded to Orpheus's grief as he loses Eurydice, a punishment for having broken the command not to turn around and look at her as she was emerging from the underworld:

> Eurydice! Eurydice!
> Orpheus cries out mournfully (*plaintif*)
> watching vanish (*voyant s'évanouir*)
> the fugitive form (*la forme fugitive*)
> the beloved form (*la forme bien-aimée*)[59]

Perhaps in order to universalize the sentiment and give it the timelessness symbolized by Latin, Rouault replaced this text with the brief three word quotation from Virgil's *Aeneid*: *Sunt lacrymae rerum*. Bernard Doering sets the context for the quoted lines: "When Aeneas arrives at Carthage and, in a temple there, sees a frieze depicting the fall of Troy and the deaths of the Trojan heroes, of his family and his friends, his eyes filled with tears (*lacrimans*), he exclaims with profound sadness:

> *Sunt lacrymae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt.*
> 'There are tears at the very heart of things,
> and the mortal nature of those things
> troubles the human mind.'"[60]

Like *"Jésus sera en agonie..."*, Virgil's line points beyond what is seen to the essence of things. Agony and anxiety are not accidental traits of human being; they are essential to human being's consciousness of being "thrown" into time and knowing that a day will come when it will cease to exist.[61]

The linkage of Christ and Orpheus goes back to early Christianity and was recovered in nineteenth-century interest in esoteric religions and occult philosophies, "a desire to create broad, all-encompassing systems of man's development—past, present, future."[62] Gustave Moreau was a key figure in this syncretic intellectual environment in which the multivalent figure of Orpheus played a central role as "poet, musician, initiate, magician, heroic intruder in Hades, lamenting lover, victim of Dionysian fury, but especially harbinger of civilization, archetypal artist, leader of cults, and priest."[63] Examples of Moreau's depictions of Orpheus include *Orpheus at the Tomb of Eurydice* (painted in 1891, the year before Rouault entered Moreau's atelier), and *Orpheus* (1865) also known as *The Thracian Girl carrying the head of Orpheus*. In what was perhaps intentional syncretism, this depiction in which Orpheus' lyre serves as a horizontal surface on which to carry his severed head resembles early-modern engravings of John the Baptist's head presented on a platter, e.g., Albrecht Dürer's *The Head of John the Baptist brought to Herodias* (**fig. 6**). Orpheus might then seem to be both poet and prophet.

Fig. 6. Albrecht Dürer, *The Head of John the Baptist brought to Herodias*, 1511, woodblock, 7 5/8 x 5 3/16 in.

In the spring of 1899, Rouault had painted and exhibited his own *Orphée* at the 1899 Salon des artistes français. Done in the academic salon style, it can perhaps be seen as a vehicle of mourning and an ode to Moreau who had died a year earlier in April 1898. Rouault's Orpheus done for the *Miserere*, as well as its pre-1926 studies (**nos. 73** and **74**) and post-1926 variants (**nos. 84** and **85**), is a very different image. With his lyre strapped over his left shoulder, Orpheus kneels on one bended knee and balances himself on his right. The figure and posture of Orpheus' head is directly echoed in two other plates: *Ne sommes-nous pas forçats?* (**no. 32**) and *L'aveugle parfois a consolé le voyant* (**no. 27ccc**); and it is indirectly echoed in two others: *Solitaire, en cette vie d'embûches et de malices* (**no. 27h**) (the same figure seated but with head bowed and his right arm in the "slave" position); and *Vierge aux sept glaives* (**no. 27aaa**), an image of Mary (the mother of Christ) alluding to a late-medieval / early-modern devotion to Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows (or Seven Swords). This devotion is based on a gospel prophecy that is extremely suggestive in imagery: a sword will pierce Mary's soul so that the thoughts of many hearts might be revealed—or, in the French, literally "unveiled" (*afin que les pensées de beaucoup de coeurs soient dévoilées*)."[64] The layers of meaning resonate with one another: enchainment or enslavement; solitude and loneliness; blindness (physical

blindness enabling the deeper insight of poet-singers like Homer and seers like Tiresias); and bereavement (both Orpheus and Christ's mother see their beloved taken away from them).

The style itself is thoroughly neo-classical in the 1920s mode discussed above, i.e., the "purism" of Le Corbusier, the neoclassicism of Cocteau, Picasso, and Stravinsky, and the industrial-mechanical "tubism" of Fernand Léger. Like Picasso's *Three Women at the Spring*, painted at Fontainebleau in the summer of 1921, Orpheus' clothing and fingers evoke fluted classical columns as does the top of his lyre; his musculature is pronounced in the classical style (note his right calf); and the figure as a whole consists of well-defined volume and relief made possible by the play of luminosity and shadow. (For a contrast, see the undefined volumes in the pre-1926 studies in ink and paper, **nos. 73** and **74**) If "Classicism is Memory and Sorrow,"[65] Rouault's representation of Orpheus is ideally suited to his lament.

Fig. 7. Georges Rouault, *Maria Lani,* 1928, black oil paint, gouache, and touches of gum on ivory wove paper, 17 1/3 x 12 3/4 in. Gift of the Arts Club of Chicago, 1932.1086. Photo courtesy the Art Institute of Chicago. © 2008 Artists Rights Society, New York / ADAGP, Paris

Yet another connection can be made, an extremely unexpected one, with Rouault's portrait of *Maria Lani or The Bluebird* (**fig. 7**), one of five different portraits he made of the French cinema actress. Rouault's *Maria Lani* was one of fifty-one representations of the singer-actress gathered together into one exhibition and published by the Éditions des Quatre Chemins (edited by Jean Cocteau, Marc Ramo, and Waldemar George (one of Rouault's greatest supporters).[66] Other catalogs were published for each of the galleries that hosted the traveling exhibition in London, New York, and Berlin.[67] Given Rouault's temperament, it is not surprising that he did not choose for publication one of his four portraits of Lani that were semi-representational and showed her cheerful and smiling with eyes wide open. Rather, he chose the portrait currently owned by the Art Institute of Chicago—extremely abstract, composed largely of the black strokes for which he was famous, the corners of her mouth turned down, her large eyes painted with a dark grey that was more akin to a death mask.

The black holes for eyes were not unintentional. Rouault's inscription in the album, preserved on the Art Institute's portrait, reads (in rhyme): *A l'oiseau bleu / crève les yeux / il chantera mieux.* Literally, the phrase "*crève les yeux*" means "gouge out the eyes"—i.e., to blind someone or oneself (intentionally or accidentally). The somewhat ghoulish meaning of the inscription would thus read: "To the bluebird / put out its eyes / it will sing better." As Jeffery Howe notes, this cruel image of the mutilated songbird, an image of the artist suffering for his art, was not only used by Gustave Moreau, but was based on actual practice.[68]

The 1928 portrait of Lani has an unnerving detail which is otherwise inexplicable: on her back she seems to carry Orpheus' lyre as it is depicted in the 1926 *Miserere* plate. In making this direct connection between Orpheus and Lani—both of them like the blinded bluebird—Rouault seems to be conflating images here: the blind seer (Tiresias) or poet (Homer); Oedipus who makes restitution by putting out his own eyes; and the poet-singer Orpheus who loses Eurydice because he turned around to look at her. Moreover, a 1926 publication makes clear that he had the bluebird image in mind when he finished the *Miserere* Orpheus, well before he was asked to contribute to the Lani volume. In 1926

he published a "Propos d'artiste" in the popular periodical *Comoedia* which reads in part:

> There are some things I recall more clearly by writing them down than by drawing them. This is the only reason I write. Sometimes it is also to reinforce my thought, as when I accompany an engraving with a caption. For example with my Orpheus:
>
> > As for that bluebird
> > Gouge out his eyes
> > A famous dilettante used to say
> > He'll sing all the better.[69]

Two final indications of Rouault's intention can be added here. First, a 1934 work in gouache and oil entitled *A l'oiseau bleu crêve les yeux, il chantera mieux* is categorized in the catalogue raisonné as a "project for the *Miserere*" indicating that, like other painted variants (for example, **nos. 59** and **60**), the "bluebird with gouged eyes" was intended to be included in the *Miserere*.[70] Second, in the catalogue raisonné comments regarding the abandoned subjects for the *Miserere*, *Orpheus* is referred to as a "version of Blue Bird" ("version de l'*Oiseau bleu*").[71] In this case, the Bluebird is not a version of Orpheus; Orpheus is a version of the Bluebird!

In sum: regardless of whether Orpheus was a blind singer in classical literature, he is meant to be blind in *Sunt lacrymae rerum*..., singing his plaintive lament: "There are tears at the very heart of things." He retains his upward pose in the post-1936 variant (**no. 84**), but in the 1931-1939 variant, like so many other works in the 1930s, both the head and eyes are lowered as the contemplative vision moves inward (**no. 85**).

VII. Blindness and Sightedness

The theme of blindness bridges from the Christian-Classical syncretism into the next two works to be considered. The first is *Seigneur, c'est vous, je vous reconnais* (**no. 27ff**). A poetic fragment by Rouault specifies the setting of this scene:

> Lord,
> It is you, I recognize you
> Even if far from Emmaus
> I always find you again (*retrouve*).[72]

Rouault's fragment alludes to the scriptural account of the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35). On Easter Sunday two of Christ's disciples were walking the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus, talking about the events of the past three days. "While they were talking and discussing," relates the gospel, "Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him (*leurs yeux étaient empêchés de le reconnaître*)." Jesus walked with them along the road and "interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures." As it was evening when they arrived, they urged him to stay with them. "When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him (*Alors leurs yeux s'ouvrirent, et ils le reconnurent*)."

Rouault's choice for depicting this moment of the opening of the eyes invites reflection. He was certainly aware of the scriptural account in which the act of recognition comes at the breaking of the bread at the supper table. His own depiction of it in 1899, *Le Christ et les disciples d'Emmaüs*,[73] exhibited at that spring's Salon des artistes français (along with his *Orphée*), is modeled after Rembrandt's *The Supper at Emmaus* (1648). Not only would Rouault have seen Rembrandt's painting at the Louvre, but his own photographic copy is preserved in the Rouault archives (**fig. 8**). In short, his decision to relocate this moment away from its traditional setting was entirely deliberate and a break from his own earlier depiction.

One explanation might be that he is conflating two recognition scenes: the one at Emmaus, and the one in which the doubting apostle Thomas refuses to believe "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side (*et si je ne mets ma main dans son côté, je ne croirai point*.") A week later, Jesus comes and stands among them, saying to Thomas: "Reach out your hand and put it in my

side (*avance aussi ta main, et mets-la dans mon côté*)." Thomas does so and recognizes Christ: "My Lord and my God (*Thomas lui répondit: Mon Seigneur et mon Dieu*)!" Jesus concludes by saying, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe *(Heureux ceux qui n'ont pas vu, et qui ont cru*)."[74]

Fig. 8. Rouault's photographic copy of Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Supper at Emmaus*, 1648. Photo courtesy Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris.

Rouault has telescoped these two events in order to make his point about appearances and reality. The words of "recognition" (*je vous reconnais*) come from the Emmaus narrative while the address "My Lord" (*Seigneur*) comes from the Thomas story—and indeed, the figure to the right is extending his hand in order to place it in the side of Christ, i.e., in the wound left by the soldier's piercing of Jesus's side with a lance (John 19:34). It is also understandable that for Rouault this revelatory moment takes place *on the road*—the road, filled with marginal and vulnerable wanderers, is privileged space for Rouault. (Compare the *Christ et Disciples* [1936] in *Passion* **[no. 47l]**—presumably this is also the road to Emmaus.) Moreover, this moment of revelation and recognition then fits in with the key image that links together the *Miserere*, namely, the moment of compassion and revelation that is Veronica's veil.

Finally, the figure of Christ in *Seigneur, c'est vous* is the mirror image of *"Il a été maltraité et opprimé"* **(no. 27y)**, a doubling that matches the doubting Thomas story exactly: it is only by putting his hand in the *wounds* of Christ that Thomas will believe in the *healing* power of Christ. The "semantic river" continues to build resonance as the images reveal layers of meaning: *toujours flagellé* **(no. 27c)**; *Le condamné s'en est allé* **(no. 27v)**; *Il a été maltraité et opprimé* **(no. 27y)**; *Seigneur, c'est vous* **(no. 27ff)**. Rouault's vision of the world, symbolist, incarnational, and sacramental, is captured in both the image and the words: "Even far from Emmaus / I always re-find you." The wounds and the glory are inextricably linked in Rouault: it is precisely by the wounds that healing paradoxically comes, hence the legend of the final plate of the *Miserere*: *"C'est par ses meurtrissures..."* **(no. 27fff)**.

A second plate that has to do with seeing and blindness is *L'aveugle parfois a consolé le voyant* **(no. 27ccc)**. In this remarkably poignant scene, a blind man leads a sighted man. The blind man's unseeing eyes look up into the sky; the sighted man's eyes and head are bowed low as if in inward contemplation—a pose that will become increasingly common in Rouault's 1930s works. As in the figure of Orpheus whose upper body posture this blind man exactly echoes (*Lacrymae rerum sunt*, **no. 27z**), the plate immediately recalls the trope of blindness in classical antiquity: Homer the poet, Tiresias the seer, Oedipus who must blind himself as retribution for having seen what one should not see. It also recalls the same instances of dramatic irony in the scriptures: the disciples on the road to Emmaus; doubting Thomas; the "disciple whom Jesus loved" who recognizes Jesus at the moment of catching a huge haul of fish (John 21:7); the poignant scene in which Mary Magdalene thinks she is talking to a gardener and suddenly recognizes him when he speaks her name (John 20:16); and the quoting of the prophet Isaiah: "And so they could not believe, because Isaiah also said,

> 'He has blinded their eyes (*Il a aveuglé leurs yeux*)
> and hardened their heart,
> so that they might not look with their eyes
> (*De peur qu'ils ne voient des yeux*)

and understand with their heart (*Qu'ils ne comprennent du coeur*)
and turn—
and I would heal them (*et que je ne les guérisse*).'"[75]

Both classical antiquity and biblical scriptures set up dramatic irony by playing on sight: those who physically see are often distracted by semblances and blind to unseen truths while those who are deprived of physical sight often have the gift of contemplative and interior vision.

A wonderful anecdote suggests, however, that this particular plate, as thoroughly consonant as it might be with these great ethical and epistemological themes of antiquity, actually emerged out of an extremely concrete and quotidian real-life experience. Rouault relates that as an adolescent he used to lead a blind priest-professor of mathematics, Père Mattei, to the School for Blind Youth (*aux "Jeunes Aveugles"*). Rouault remarks on the irony of the situation: he, the sighted person, was "a little bit melancholic" and in that period of his life "quasi-mute." The blind priest, by contrast, "happy as a little songbird" (*gai comme pinsonnet*) and possessing an extraordinary memory, talked a hundred miles a minute (*me débitait*) without stopping reciting verses from the poets Alfred de Musset and Alfred de Vigny.[76] Rouault turns this story into verse:

The unsighted man, quick, alert, and happy
like a looting sparrow
speaks and speaks again to the dark seer
who leads him[77]
the song of happiness.

O diligent unsighted
immerse my mind and heart
into the living water of your resignation
both strong and gentle.[78]

In light of this story and its expression in verse, the *Miserere* plate is a metaphorical representation of what was going on beneath appearances. On the visible level, the sighted Rouault led the blind priest-professor. But on the metaphorical level, the "blind songbird" singing poetic verses from memory—a Homer, perhaps, or Orpheus—is leading and consoling the melancholic Rouault. Not surprisingly, then, the figure of the blind man in this plate closely reproduces the figure of Orpheus in *Lacrymae sunt rerum* as well as the enchained slave who (as opposed to King Ubu) possesses insight about human nature: *Ne sommes-nous pas forçats?* (**no. 32**).

VIII. Land's End: Now you see it. Now you don't.

The last exhibited plate to be considered is *En ces temps noirs de jactance et d'incroyance, Notre-Dame de la Fin des Terres vigilantes* (**no. 27ddd**). In the *Miserere* series, it directly follows *L'aveugle parfois a consolé...* On first glance, it would seem that there is no connection between the two: *En ces temps noirs* appears to be one of countless variations on the Madonna and Child produced throughout the centuries. But some archeological digging reveals that, in fact, "Our Lady of the Ends of the Earth" (or "Land's End") is intimately connected to the theme of seeing—as in, "Now you see it. Now you don't."

The subject matter is somewhat rare as Rouault painted only a handful of works depicting Christ's mother. This fact is notable since Rouault has been customarily identified not only as a "religious" artist of the twentieth century, but also as a specifically "Catholic" one. The absence of the figure of Mary comes as a surprise, then, since she was absolutely central to Catholic iconography during the Ultramontanist period extending from the 1830s through the 1950s. It is even more surprising when we consider that three important influences on Rouault—Joris-Karl Huysmans, Léon Bloy, and Jacques Maritain—were all strongly (and somewhat morbidly) attached to the cult of Our Lady of la Salette, an extremely grim, menacing and apocalyptic figure who provided Catholic literary elites an alternative to the more popular figure of Our Lady of Lourdes.[79]

Rouault seems not to have been much swayed by this—not by official Catholicism's use of Marian

cults as a marker of identity in the late-modern period; not by popular devotions to Lourdes or Fatima; and not by the harsh La Salette piety of his Catholic associates. It is curious, then, that when the figure of Mary appears in Rouault's *chef-d'oeuvre*, she is represented three times: first, in a traditional crucifixion setting along with St. John and Mary Magdalene on which Rouault produced many variations—*"Aimez-vous les uns les autres."* (**no. 27ee**); second, *Vierge aux sept glaives* (considered above, **no. 27aaa**); and third, *Notre-Dame de la Fin des Terres* (**no. 27ddd**).

Notre-Dame de la Fin des Terres is a tenth-century Romanesque basilica church located in Soulac-sur-Mer, a large seaside resort in Aquitaine (at the northernmost tip of Medoc in the Bordeaux wine region) known for its long beach and sand dunes.[80] According to regional tradition, after the Ascension of Christ, Veronica left the Holy Land and arrived at Soulac with relics of Mary, Christ's mother. Veronica preached, died, and was buried there, making Soulac both a tomb as well as a great reliquary. It served as an alternative route (walking along the estuary of the Gironde) for pilgrims making their way to Santiago de Compostela who wanted to venerate Veronica's tomb on the way. (This alternative was also called the "English path" [*voie des Anglais*] since its location on the Atlantic ocean made it convenient for pilgrims from England and Holland to land, venerate Veronica's shrine, and then begin their journey southward to Spain.) Once again we see Rouault's systematic imagination at work in the overall structure of the *Miserere*: Veronica reappears, albeit somewhat veiled, toward the end of the series under this plate dedicated to Our Lady of Lands' End.

Not surprisingly, there is more. The basilica was covered over by sand several times through the centuries and could only be entered by walking down a flight of stairs. It was sacked by the Huguenots in 1622 and completely buried beneath a sand dune in 1757. The sand was not uncovered for another century (during the Second Empire in 1859-60) after which the basilica was once again used for religious services. Publications about the site informed both the religiously faithful as well as the newly-emergent tourist industry: *Notre-Dame de Soulac ou de la Fin-des-Terres* (1865); *Les origines chrétiennes de Bordeaux* (1867); *Histoire de sainte Véronique* (1875); *Bains de mer, Soulac bains* (1876); *Notre-Dame-de-la-Fin-des-Terres* (1880?). Given Rouault's love for poetry, he would undoubtedly have enjoyed these lines of verse, written very much in his own style, from *Soulac Re-emergent: poem* (1874).

L'église antique
Où la relique
De Véronique
Reçoit l'encens,
Disparut toute;
Dessus la voûte
Fut une route
Pour les passants.

The old church
Where the relic
Of Veronica
Received incense
Completely disappeared;
Above the vaulting
Was a road
For the passers-by.[82]

On July 20, 1891, the Third Republic classified the re-emergent basilica as an historic monument. Two years later—and two years after Rouault had started studying catechism with Fr. Vallée—Dom Bernard Maréchaux, a Benedictine monk, published a study filled with illustrations: *Notre-Dame de la Fin des Terres de Soulac* (**fig. 9**).[83] A little over a century later, the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO inscribed the basilica of Notre-Dame-de-la-Fin-des-Terres, along with all the routes of Santiago de Compostela in France, on its World Heritage List (*Patrimoine mondial de l'Humanité*) in 1998.

As with so many images, Rouault transforms this concrete artifact into larger metaphorical meanings. In verses written about this image, Rouault first imagines himself at Soulac-sur Mer:

Our Lady of Lands' End,
I saw you honored, before your

modest chapel was uncovered with sand,
a furrow of tears on your gentle face (*sillon des pleurs sur votre doux visage*)
so deeply marked with harsh ravines (*si bien marqué de dures ravines*).[84]

The "furrow" (*sillon*) and the "ravines" (*ravines*) here refer to the ridges created by the sand dunes that had covered the basilica. They are then personified to apply not only to Mary's chapel but to Mary herself: the furrows and ravines become the wrinkles that ravage the face's skin due to sorrows and the process of aging. A third meaning resonates here when we consider Rouault's memories of his childhood: "I wandered from Belleville to Montmartre...In these old districts, I suffered in silence, like so many others, such miseries (*tant de misères*) that draw deep furrows and seams into the face of even the most beautiful girl in the world (*qui creusent sillons et rides profondes sur le visage de la plus belle fille du monde*)..."[85] A comparison of Rouault's Madonna and child here and in its 1939 painted variant (also known as *Notre Dame des Champs*, **no. 59**) with the 1951 *Vieux Faubourg (mère et enfants)* (**no. 69**) shows the way in which the sorrows of Christ's mother and the sorrows that etch themselves into the faces of poverty-stricken mothers freely flow in and out of one another. The "honor" here is the mark etched into the "face," the badge of honor that marks out one who has suffered.

In the lines that follow, Rouault moves from this touching domestic image to one directly concerned with epistemology and knowledge, a theme that occurs with increasing frequency in the 1930s and 1940s.[86] The various appearances and disappearances of the basilica become a playful attack on positivism's exclusive trust in what is visible.

Did not our elders
build a bridge over the abyss (*un pont sur l'abîme*),
so fragile that many positivists
are afraid to take it?[87]

Concretely, the "bridge" refers to the flight of stairs that were built in order to descend from the land's end down into the basilica engulfed in the dunes. The "abyss" is that from which one passes from the alleged certainty of *terra firma* into the basilica which cannot be visibly seen.

But Rouault's use of the word "abyss"—*l'abîme*—evokes Pascal, just as it did for Baudelaire:

Pascal avait son gouffre, avec lui se mouvant.
—Hélas! tout est abîme,—

Pascal had his abyss that moved along with him.
—Alas! all is abysmal,—action, desire, dream,
Word! and over my hair which stands on end
I feel the wind of Fear pass frequently.[88]

Fig. 9. Cover for Dom Bernard-Marie Maréchaux, *N.-D. de la Fin des Terres de Soulac* (Bordeaux: Imprimerie Nouvelle A. Bellier, 1893).

For Pascal, the word *abîme* means that "middle" space human beings occupy between infinity and nothingness. It occurs three times in his extended reflections on the fragility not only of our existential situation, but as a corollary of our knowledge, and consequently, of our vain desire for certainty.

Whoever considers himself in this way will be afraid of himself, and seeing himself supported by the size nature has given him between these two abysses of the infinite and nothingness (*entre ces deux abîmes de l'infini et du néant*), he will tremble at these marvels (*il tremblera*

dans la vue de ces merveilles)… For, in the end, what is man in nature? A nothing compared to the infinite, an everything compared to the nothing, a midpoint between nothing and everything (*un milieu entre rien et tout*), infinitely removed from understanding the extremes: the end of things and their principle (*principe*) are hopelessly hidden from him in an impenetrable secret (*inviciblement cachés dans un secret impénétrable*)…He is equally incapable of seeing the nothingness from which he derives and the infinite in which he is engulfed (*Également incapable de voir le néant d'où il est tiré et l'infini où il est englouti*)…

This is our true state. It is what makes us incapable of certain knowledge or absolute ignorance (*incapables de savoir certainement et d'ignorer absolument*). We float on a vast ocean, ever uncertain and adrift, blown this way or that (*toujours incertains et flottants, poussés d'un bout vers l'autre*). Whenever we think we have some point to which we can cling and fasten ourselves, it shakes free and leaves us behind (*il branle, et nous quitte*). And if we follow it, it eludes our grasp, slides away and escapes forever (*il échappe à nos prises, nous glisse et fuit d'une fuite éternelle*). Nothing stays still for us. This is our natural condition and yet the one farthest from our inclination. We burn with desire to find firm ground and an ultimate secure base on which to build a tower reaching up to the infinite. But our whole foundation cracks, and the earth opens up into abysses (*et la terre s'ouvre jusqu'aux abîmes*).

Let us, therefore, not seek certainty and stability. Our reason is always deceived by inconstant appearances (*toujours déçue par l'inconstance des apparences*); nothing can affix the finite between the two infinites that both enclose and escape it (*les deux infinis qui l'enferment et le fuient*).[89]

The *Miserere* is a tightly-woven fabric linked throughout by the problem of semblance and reality. The blind console the sighted; the poet and songbird sing more beautifully without sight; moments of re-cognition come and go—on the road; Veronica's act of compassion leads to a revelation—on the road. At the end of *terra firma*, "in these dark times of vainglory and unbelief," where the pilgrim's path arrives at the finite limits of the earth and the positivist's certainty stumbles on the bridge over the abyss, Veronica's tomb still stands as sand covers and uncovers and covers again, concealing and revealing and concealing. There are tears at the very heart of things. Our Lady of Land's End—ever vigilant.

Endnotes

1 Annie Dillard, "Seeing," *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* (1974; New York: Harper Perennial, 2007) 20, 21, 36.

2 For the context of Rouault's reception in post-1945 France and the United States, see Sheila Nowinski and David Quigley in this volume.

3 See Anne Davenport in this volume.

4 For the postwar "call to order" see Stephen Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism: Mystic Modernism in Postwar Paris, 1919-1933* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 2005) 12, 143, 144, 151, 175, 234. Cf. *L'Esprit nouveau: Purism in Paris, 1918-1925*, ed. Carol S Eliel (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art in association with Harry N. Abrams, 2001); and Marianne Lamonaca, "A 'Return to Order': Issues of the Vernacular and the Classical in Italian Inter-War Design," in *Designing Modernity. The Arts of Reform and Persuasion 1885-1945*, ed. Wendy Kaplan (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1995) 194-221.

5 Latin: Vulgate; English: Douay-Rheims.

6 The most recent authoritative listing of the legends' origins may be found in Georges Rouault, *Le Miserere de Georges Rouault* (Paris: Cerf, 2004) 133-136. For earlier source listings in French, English, and Japanese, see Georges Rouault, *Miserere*, new edition enlarged with texts and commentaries (Paris: Editions le Léopard d'or; Tokyo: Zauho Press, 1991).

7 See entries for "Lucan" and "Pharsalia" in *Oxford Companion to Classical Literature*, ed. M.C. Howatson, 2d ed. (1989; New York: Oxford Univ. Press, reprinted with corrections, 1991) 328-329; 428-429.

8 Lucan, *Pharsalia*, trans. Jane Wilson Joyce (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1993) IX: 961, 964-969.

9 David Williams, "Voltaire's 'True Essay' on Epic Poetry," *The Modern Language Review* 88/1 (January 1993): 46-57, see p. 46.

10 Voltaire, *Essai sur la poésie époque* (1733); in *The Complete Works of Voltaire*, ed. Theodore Besterman (then by W. H. Barber), 69 vols. (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1994-), 3b:435.

11 Voltaire, *Essai sur la poésie époque* 3b:436-437.

12 Michael Camille, *Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1992) 1992) 82-85.

13 Ernst Kris, "Ego Development and the Comic," qtd. in Camille 81. For Rouault's smiling variant painted in oil, see OP 1593 bis (1939). Compare the numerous grotesques produced for the *Cirque de l'Étoile Filante* in OP 1288-1348.

14 Paul Richer, *L'art et la médicine* (Paris: Gaultier, Magnier, 1900); Hans Weigert, "Die Masken der Kathedrale zu Reims," *Pantheon* 14 (1934): 246-50; both cited in Camille, 84.

15 Gilles Corrozet, *Hécatomgraphie, c'est à dire les descriptions de cent figures et hystoires, contenantes plusieurs appophtegmes, proverbes, sentences et dictz, tant des anciens que des modernes* (Paris: D. Janot, 1540); reprinted as *Hécatomgraphie de Gilles Corrozet*, ed. Ch. Oulmont (Paris: H. Champion, 1905). I am grateful to Virginia Reinburg for this reference and for supplying the illustration.

16 As in the Corrozet example shown here, the emblem book combines a title, poem, and picture, mixing French and Latin. (An earlier publication by Corrozet gives the aphorism in Latin and then a poem in French explaining it.) The emblem book as a genre was an attempt to meld classical learning with modern, vernacular, civic life. All the French emblem books of the 16th century (including Corrozet's *Hécatomgraphie*) have been digitized and made available online: http://www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/french/index.php. Accessed 10 June 2008. I am grateful to Virginia Reinburg for alerting me to this probable genre source of Rouault's *Miserere*.

17 Anne Palms Chalmers, "A Little French Book," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, new series 27/10 (June 1969): 445-459, see p. 448.

18 Rouault, poem from unpublished series entitled "Images," Rouault archives; in *Le Miserere de Georges Rouault* (Paris: Cerf, 2004) 106.

19 1 Kings 10:11-12.

20 Louis Christophe and Gustave Paul Doré, *La Sainte Bible selon la Vulgate: Traduction nouvelle avec les dessins de Gustave Doré* (Tours: Alfred Mame et fils, 1866). These plates may be viewed online in a digital file of *The Doré Bible Gallery, Containing One Hundred Superb Illustrations and a Page of Explanatory Letter-press Facing Each* (Chicago: Belford-Clarke Co., 1891) at http://www.gutenberg.org/files/8710/8710-h/8710-h.htm. Accessed 10 June 2008. They are also available in an inexpensive Dover edition: *The Doré Bible Illustrations. 241 Plates by Gustave Doré* (New York: Dover Publications, 1974).

21 See 1 Kings 10:11-12: "*Les navires de Hiram, qui apportèrent de l'or d'Ophir, amenèrent aussi d'Ophir une grande quantité de bois de sandal et des pierres précieuses. Le roi fit avec le bois de sandal des balustrades pour la maison de l'Eternel et pour la maison du roi, et des harpes et des luths pour les chantres. Il ne vint plus de ce bois de sandal, et on n'en a plus vu jusqu'à ce jour.*" cf. 2 Chronicles 9:10: "*Les serviteurs de Huram et les serviteurs de Salomon, qui apportèrent de l'or d'Ophir, amenèrent aussi du bois de sandal et des pierres précieuses.*" *La Sainte Bible, qui comprend l'Ancien et le nouveau Testament, traduits sur les textes originaux, hébreu et grec par Louis Segond*, 2 vols. in 1 (Paris: Delessert, 1901).

22 John 2:19-22; cf. Matthew 26:61; Matthew 27:40; Mark 14:58; Mark 15:29; Acts 6:14.

23 Charles Baudelaire, "Correspondances" ("Correspondences"), Charles Baudelaire, *Les Fleurs du mal*, trans. Richard Howard (Brighton, Sussex: The Harvester Press Ltd., 1982) English 15; French, 193.

24 See the analysis by Jennifer M. Sheppard, "The Inscription in Manet's 'The Dead Christ, with Angels," *Metropolitan Museum Journal*, 16 (1981): 199-200.

25 The lines rhyme: "*Politiciens austères / de rhétorique amère / consolent les mères*." This is found in a typescript by Isabelle Rouault (1972, Rouault Archives) that was translated into Japanese and published in 1972. I am deeply grateful to Gilles Rouault for communicating this manuscript.

26 The quotations are from Isabelle Rouault's typescript (1972, Rouault Archives).

27 Rouault, *De profundis* (1912). Watercolor and pastel, 20.3 x 31.3 cm. Musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris. Reproduced in Georges Rouault, *Georges Rouault, forme, couleur, harmonie,* catalogue published for the Musée d'art moderne et contemporain de Strasbourg exhibition, 10 November 2006 to 18 March 2007, commissariat Fabrice Hergott (Strasbourg: Musées de Strasbourg, 2006) 245.

28 Letter of Rouault to Jacques Rivière (13 November 1912); unpublished, from the Rouault archives, qtd. in Hergott, *Forme, couleur, harmonie* 245.

29 For vicarious suffering see Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 43-44.

30 Isaiah 53. 4-5. English: NRSV; French: Louis Segond 1910.

31 1 Peter 2:23. English: NRSV; French: Louis Segond 1910.

32 1 Peter 2:24. English: NRSV, alternative translation o; French: Louis Segond 1910.

33 I am grateful to Bernard Doering for this translation.

34 For a consideration of Rouault's method in light of Martha Nussbaum's reading of Aristotle, see James Keenan in this volume.

35 Letter of Rouault to André Suarès (16 July 1911), in *Correspondance [de] Georges Rouault [et] André Suarès* (Paris: Gallimard, 1960) 3-4.

36 André Suarès, *Trois Hommes. Pascal, Ibsen, Dostoïevski* (Paris: Éditions de la Nouvelle Revue Française) 363. Suarès signs the Dostoevsky section as having been completed in 1910.

37 Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Crime et châtiment: Journal de Raskolnikov: Les carnets de Crime et châtiment: Souvenirs de la maison des morts*, trs. D. Ergaz, et al., ed. Sylvie Luneau (Paris: (Gallimard, 1950) 596.

38 English: Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The House of the Dead*, trans. David McDuff (New York: Penguin, 1985) 27; French: *Souvenirs de la maison des morts*, in Dostoevsky (Gallimard, 1950) 915, 916.

39 Dostoevsky, *House of the Dead*, qtd. in Konstantin Mochulsky, *Dostoevsky. His Life and Work*, trans. Michael A. Minihan (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1967) 191.

40 Mochulsky 191.

41 English: Voltaire, *Candide*, trans. and ed. Daniel Gordon (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1999) 110, 111; French: Voltaire, *The Complete Works of Voltaire* 48:243, 244.

42 I am deeply grateful to Gilles Rouault for this information.

43 See Schloesser, "1920-1929: Jazz Age Graphic Shock," in this volume.

44 French: Alfred Jarry, *Ubu roi. Ubu enchaîné. Les paralipomènes d'Ubu. Questions de théâtre. Les minutes de sable mémorial. César-antichrist. Poésies. L'autre Alceste.*, ed. René Massat (Lausanne: H. Kaeser, 1948) 120; English: Alfred Jarry, *The Ubu Plays*, trans. Cyril Connolly and Simon Watson Taylor (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd. 1965, 1968) 129.

45 Jarry, *Ubu enchaîné*, French 134, 137; English 142, 145

46 Jarry echoes Arthur Rimbaud's "Seascape" (*Marine*): "Chariots of silver and copper—/ Prows of silver and steel—/ Beat foam—/ Stirring stumps of bramble—" Rimbaud, *Rimbaud Complete*, ed. Wyatt Alexander Mason (New York: Modern Library, 2002) English 252; French 517.

47 Jarry, *Ubu enchaîné*, French 140, 141; English 147, 148

48 Jarry, *Ubu enchaîné*, French 141; English 148

49 As late as the June 1947 inventory made by Isabelle Rouault of the titles for each of the 59 aquatints in *Miserere*—i.e., the titles that predate the revision made by Rouault with l'Abbé Morel for the 1948 edition—the plate here under consideration (*nous croyant rois*) was, in fact, listed as *Ubu Roi*. I am deeply grateful to Gilles Rouault for this information.

50 For this discussion see Schloesser, "1902-1920: The Hard Metier of Unmasking," in this volume.

51 Both French and English in Bernard Dorival and Isabelle Rouault, *Rouault: l'œuvre peint*, 2 vols. (Monte-Carlo: Éditions André Sauret, 1988) 1:40. (The OP numbers are those assigned to Rouault's works in this catalogue raisonné.)

52 Original text reads: "*Le condamné s'en est allé / Indifférent et fatigué... / ... son avocat en phrases creuses / Et imposantes / A proclamé son innocence... / ... un homme rouge / Et se dressant / A disculpé la société / Et chargé l'accusé / Sous un Jésus en croix / Oublié là./*" These lines were first published in Rouault, "Propos d'artistes," *Comoedia*, responses

collated by Fels (1926); reprinted in Hergott, *Forme, couleur, harmonie* 45-46, at 46; they next appeared in Rouault, *Paysages légendaires* (Paris: Éditions Porteret, 1929); reprinted in *Le Miserere de Georges Rouault* (Cerf 2004) 50, 52, 54.

53 Milan Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, trans. Michael Henry Heim (New York: Harper Perennial, [1984] 1991) 88.

54 Isaiah 53:7. NRSV

55 Pascal, *Pensées* Plèiade 717/Lafume 919/Sellier 749. Fragments of Pascal's *Pensées* are referenced according to their Plèiade / Lafuma / Sellier numbers. For Plèiade, see Pascal, *Oeuvres complètes*, 2 vols. (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2000), vol. 2; for Lafuma, see Pascal, *Pensées*, trans. A.J. Krailsheimer, rev. ed. (New York: Penguin, 1995); for Sellier, see Pascal, *Pensées*, ed. and trans. Roger Ariew (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2005).

56 For cancelled plates see François Chapon and Isabelle Rouault, *Rouault: œuvre gravé*, 2 vols. (Monte-Carlo: Éditions André Sauret, 1978) 1:316-319; this is cancelled plate 151 at 319. (The OG numbers are those assigned to Rouault's works in this catalogue raisonné.)

57 Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, trans. Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis, eds. Joseph Fessio and John Kenneth Riches, 7 vols. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press; New York: Crossroad Publications, 1983-1991) 1:460; von Balthasar, *La Gloire et la croix: les aspects esthétiques de la Révélation. I: Apparition*, trans. Robert Givord (Paris: Aubier, 1965) 388; orig. von Balthasar, *Herrlichkeit. Eine theologische Ästhetik* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1960-). English 1:460; French 388. Emphasis on German (*Ungestalt*, *Übergestalt*) is original in English translation. Cf. von Balthasar: "When Tammuz, Adonis, Attis, or Baldur die, this is 'destiny,' and the divine power that awakens them from the dead proves to be stronger than destiny. But 'only Christianity has made death itself to be salvation. All other "saviour" religions preach life out of death; the Gospel of the Cross proclaims salvation *in* death. Here total powerlessness becomes the highest unfolding of power, and utter disaster becomes salvation.' What occurs is not the crowning of a human drama with divine victory; rather, the drama of human dissolution as a whole becomes an expression of eternal love." English 1:504; quoting Gerhard van der Leeuw, *Phänomenologie der Religion* (Tübingen: Verlag von J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1933) 94. Emphasis original.

58 See Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 85-86.

59 These verses come from the typescript of Isabelle Rouault (1972, Rouault Archives) cited above (note 25) with gratitude to Gilles Rouault.

60 Virgil, *Aeneid* I, 462. See Bernard Doering in this volume.

61 See discussion of Pascal and Heidegger on anxiety in Schloesser, "1920-1929: Jazz Age Graphic Shock," in this volume.

62 Dorothy M. Kosinski, "Gustave Moreau's 'La Vie de l'humanité': Orpheus in the Context of Religious Syncretism, Universal Histories, and Occultism," *Art Journal* 46/1, Mysticism and Occultism in Modern Art (Spring 1987) 9-14, see p. 13

63 Kosinski 13

64 Luke 2:35. French: Louis Segond 1910. The late-medieval / early-modern devotion linking Christ's passion with Mary's compassion and Christ's redemption with Mary's co-redemption was the subject of a historical article written by the Bollandist Hippolyte Delehaye in 1893 (the year after Rouault entered Moreau's atelier), "La Vierge aux sept glaives." In 1926, the year Rouault produced this engraving, G. K. Chesterton published his book, *The Queen of Seven Swords*. Rouault would have known Chesterton through Jacques Maritain who had just published him in his new publishing venture, the *Roseau d'Or*, in its inaugural year (1925). For Mary, see Otto G. von Simson "*Compassio* and *Co-redemptio* in Roger van der Weyden's *Descent from the Cross*," *The Art Bulletin* 35/1 (March 1953) 9-16, at 13; quoting Hippolyte Delehaye, "La Vierge aux sept glaives," *Analecta Bollandiana* 12 (1893):338-44. For Chesterton see G. K. Chesterton, *The Queen of Seven Swords* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1926); and Maritain, see Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 182.

65 Vincent Scully, *Architecture: The Natural and the Manmade* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), 297.

66 *Maria Lani*, eds. Jean Cocteau, Marc Ramo, Waldemar George (Paris: Éditions des Quatre Chemins, 1929).

67 *Portraits of Maria Lani by Fifty-one Painters: Brummer Gallery, Inc.: November 1st to 28th, 1929* eds. Jean Cocteau, Marc Ramo, Waldemar Goerge (New York: The Gallery, 1929).

68 See Jeffery Howe in this volume.

69 Rouault, "Propos d'artistes," *Comoedia*, responses collated by Fels (1926); reprinted in Hergott, *Forme, couleur, harmonie* 45-46, at 46. Translation by Bernard Doering.

70 OP 1702.

71 Chapon and Rouault, *Œuvre gravé* 1:316. I am deeply grateful to Gilles Rouault for directing me to both these indications.

72 "*Seigneur / C'est vous, je vous reconnais / Même loin d'Emmaüs / Toujours je vous retrouve.*" The resonance of the verb *retrouver* is difficult to reproduce in English. Literally, it translates as "re-find"

(*re-trouver*); compare *reconnais* (literally: "to re-know" or "know again") with the English "re-cognize." Unpublished fragment in Rouault archives; in *Le Miserere de Georges Rouault* (Cerf, 2004) 78.

73 OP 40.

74 John 20:25-29. English: NRSV; French: Segond (1910)

75 John 12:39-40. English: NRSV; French: Segond (1910)

76 Unpublished document; qtd. in *Le Miserere de Georges Rouault* (Cerf, 2004) 124.

77 A Rouault word-play (emphasis is original): the word *sombre* can mean glum, gloomy, or melancholic; the word *voyant* in this context means the "sighted" person as opposed to the blind one; but it normally means a seer in the sense of a prophet or visionary. On its most pedestrian level the juxtaposition of *sombre voyant* means "the sighted person who is gloomy"; but poetically, it is the visionary or seer whose insight is more accurate because it is in the dark; moreover, the seer who is made gloomy by such insight. These verses come from the typescript of Isabelle Rouault (1972, Rouault Archives) cited above (note 25) with gratitude to Gilles Rouault.

78 The *l'eau vive* means running water from a spring; but it is also a biblical image. See, for example: "*Une fontaine des jardins, Une source d'eaux vives, Des ruisseaux du Liban.*" (Song of Solomon 4:15); "*Car mon peuple a commis un double péché: Ils m'ont abandonné, moi qui suis une source d'eau vive, Pour se creuser des citernes, des citernes crevassées, Qui ne retiennent pas l'eau.*" (Jeremiah 2:13); "*En ce jour-là, des eaux vives sortiront de Jérusalem, Et couleront moitié vers la mer orientale, Moitié vers la mer occidentale; Il en sera ainsi été et hiver.*" (Zechariah 14:8); "*Jésus lui répondit: Si tu connaissais le don de Dieu et qui est celui qui te dit: Donne-moi à boire! tu lui aurais toi-même demandé à boire, et il t'aurait donné de l'eau vive.*" (John 4:10). French: Segond (1910)

79 Suzanne K. Kaufman, *Consuming Visions: Mass Culture and the Lourdes Shrine* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 2005) 86-87; François Angelier, "Les écrivains et La Salette: Huysmans, Bloy, Claudel, *Communio* 22/4 (July-August 1997): 49-56 ; see also Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 68, 72, 79.

80 For a brief introduction, see Elisabeth Féghall, "Notre-Dame de la Fin des Terres de Soulac-sur-mer," *Citadelle* 16 (May 2008); available at http://www.citadelle.org/magazine.cfm?mag_id=16&doc_id=140. Accessed 4 June 2008.

81 Surveys, illustrations, and judiciously chosen excerpts from these and numerous other works dating from 1784 to 1969 may be found in Roger Chaillot, *Soulac-sur-Mer. Notre-Dame-de-la-fin-des-Terres et le Phare de Cordouan* (Libourne: L'Imprimerie Moderne, 1971).

82 Louis Boué, *Soulac renaissant: poëme* (Bordeaux: Imprimerie de J. Delmas, 1874) 5; qtd. in Chaillot 66.

83 Dom Bernard-Marie Maréchaux, *N.-D. de la Fin des Terres de Soulac* (Bordeaux: Imprimerie Nouvelle A. Bellier, 1893).

84 Rouault, qtd. in Dorival and Rouault, *l'Œuvre peint* 2:52.

85 Georges Rouault, *Soliloques*, ed. Claude Roulet (Neuchâtel: Ides et Calendes, 1944), qtd. in Dorival and Rouault, *l'Œuvre peint* 1:130.

86 See, for example, these lines from *Stella Vespertina* (1947): "A wise man once said, 'There is no longer any mystery.' One can be very wise and foolish at the same time. All is imponderable in the spiritual realm the artist is seeking to explore, but there reigns a hidden order that is more true than that pertaining to weight and measure." The "wise man" is the 19th-century chemist, Marcelin Berthelot. His phrase was a favorite of the *renouveau catholique* and served to sum up Catholicism's vehement opposition to positivism. See Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 26, 91. Rouault's passage qtd. in Rouault, *Sur l'art et sur la vie* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971) 108.

87 Rouault, qtd. in Dorival and Rouault, *l'Œuvre peint* 2:52.

88 Baudelaire, "Le Gouffre" ("The Abyss"), trans. Howard, English 174; French 352.

89 Pascal, *Pensées* Plèiade 185/Lafume 199/Sellier 230.

"Spleen and Ideal in Strife": Rouault's Baudelaire, 1918–1927

Soo Yun Kang

Around 1918, Georges Rouault approached Ambroise Vollard about publishing an illustrated edition of *The Flowers of Evil* by Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867). Rouault planned on an album of around fifty etchings which would not be "overly scrupulous servants" of the poem wanting "to comment on the text," but images "in the atmosphere" of the poetry in general.[1] As in the case of Rouault's *Miserere*, this project was ambitious and has a complicated history: only fourteen engravings were completed by 1927, the year when Rouault interrupted work on both the *Miserere* and the *Fleurs du mal* due to a convergence of numerous simultaneous projects (including the definitive corrections for *Réincarnations du Père Ubu* in 1928).[2] Nevertheless, Rouault's simultaneous work on the *Miserere* and the *Fleurs du mal* from 1918-1927 allows us to compare mutual influences and consider the strong influence of Baudelaire on the artist.

Along with Blaise Pascal (1623-1662), Paul Verlaine (1844-1896), Léon Bloy (1846-1917), and Joris-Karl Huysmans (1848-1907), Baudelaire was one of Rouault's favorite authors.[3] Rouault kept volumes of Baudelaire on his bedside table: first, the posthumous *Le Spleen de Paris: Petits poèmes en prose* (1869), and later, *Les Fleurs du mal* (1861) from which he would frequently recite poems to his daughters.[4] In 1926, Rouault published *Souvenirs intimes* (Personal Remembrances), a collection of tributes to various writers and artists who had made an impact on him. In addition to chapters on Bloy, Huysmans, and others, a chapter was devoted to Baudelaire with an *hors-texte* print of his portrait, largely addressing the critics of *Les Fleurs du mal* and defending the poet.[5] The tribute begins with a confession of Rouault's original hesitation in taking up this collection, which, as its title indicates—"The Poems of Evil" ("fleur" being an old metaphor for "poem")—largely deals with evil. Then Rouault elaborates on the genius of Baudelaire, pointing to the beautiful images that he created through his words. More importantly, Rouault detects a spiritual sensibility in the masterful compositions of Baudelaire and his fellow controversial poet, Verlaine: "If a Baudelaire and a Verlaine seemed in your eyes to have fallen so low, they nevertheless retain such a fragrance and bouquet of spiritual wine that naturally distinguish them from those who surround them, flatter them, censure them or believe they should be their peers, that a mere word or a look suffices to put all things back into proper order."[6]

Les Fleurs du mal created a scandal on its publication in June 1857. One month later, the "Sûreté Publique" (Public Security) section of the Ministry of the Interior sent its report to the public prosecutor who initiated a lawsuit against Baudelaire and his publishers and called for confiscation of the book. In August, the court convicted Baudelaire and his publishers of "offences against public morality and

accepted standards." Baudelaire was fined 300 francs and his publishers 100 francs each, and six poems were ordered deleted from further publications: "Jewels," "Lethe," "To Her Who is Too Gay," "Lesbos," "Damned Women (Delphinia and Hippolyta)," and "The Vampire's Metamorphoses." The sum was enormous for Baudelaire—more than his monthly allowance—and he wrote the Empress Eugénie asking for an intervention. His fine was reduced to 50 francs in January 1858.[7] This did little to mitigate his despair, however. In addition to poverty and emotional stress about the work that remained unfinished, he suffered from incurable syphilis and from years of using laudanum.[8] He would die ten years after the publication of *Les Fleurs du mal* at the age of forty-six.

Baudelaire's preface to the book—"To the Reader"—sets the overall tone and reveals the major themes of the entire collection:

> Our sins are lavish, our repentance mean;
> We take good care that each confession pays,
> Then blithely we resume our miry ways,
> As though base tears could wash our spirits clean.
>
> Our thoughts on evil's pillow, spellbound there,
> Are rocked by Satan Trismegitus' hand,
> And, at the learned alchemist's command,
> Our willpower's precious metal melts to air.
>
> The Devil sets our puppets' limbs to work,
> So that in loathsome things we search for bliss;
> Each day we take one pace down Hell's abyss,
> Yet shudderless descend through fetid murk.[9]

Baudelaire's fundamental point is anti-positivist: the world is a "forest of symbols" in which semblance "corresponds" to reality.[10] Human suffering is not caused merely by human acts seen by the naked eye, but more importantly by Satan, a prominent force throughout the poems. By means of ingenious words and lyrical phrases portraying spirits as viable and relevant, Baudelaire tries to persuade the reader that the spiritual world, whether good or evil, is just as alive as the physical. Although human protagonists make efforts toward repentance and salvation, they inevitably succumb to the force of evil. Evil is not something otherworldly; rather it is a palpable existence in the daily surroundings of the people.

> The Demon at my side does nought but seethe;
> He swims around me like a formless mist;
> I gulp this, feel him burn me as I breathe,
> Sowing guilty lusts that doggedly persist.[11]

Evil engulfs humans, interacting with individuals and interfering in their affairs. They in turn acknowledge and succumb to spirits, and in some cases even worship Satan (satanism and occultism having played a significant role in both the Decadent movement as well as Catholic Revivalism.[12]) Allegiance to evil does not bring joy, however, only guilt and suffering. The most prominent character in *Les Fleurs du mal* is the poet himself, who cannot resist Satan, feels defeated, is constantly plagued by thoughts of death, and is overcome by melancholy: "I am a graveyard abhorred by the moon."[13]

Despite the emphasis on evil and the negative forces of life, ultimately the poems speak of a yearning or hunger for transcendence, whether the realm of God or Satan—anything beyond this mundane world of materiality and suffering. The presence of evil in the world, the immense suffering of individuals and ultimately the desire for salvation are evident themes of the book that obviously appealed to Rouault, who was preoccupied with these very subjects all his life.

I. Rouault's *Les Fleurs du mal* (1927)

The titles of Rouault's posthumously published fourteen plates were assigned not by the artist, but by his daughters, Geneviève and Isabelle, who based their decisions on verses read to them over many years.[14] Through their references to relevant

poems, the titles serve to confirm the subjects with which Rouault was most preoccupied in Baudelaire's poetry.

Satan. The most prominent image of Rouault's *Les Fleurs du mal*, not surprisingly, is Satan, who appears in four plates. All four are simply titled *Satan*, not referring to any specific poem. The artist captures him as a casual interlocutor of human affairs, well blended into their lives (**nos. 26a-c**). Satan's ubiquitous presence in everyday lives was not only a theme in Baudelaire's mid-nineteenth-century work but also a very fashionable topic in 1926-1927, the years in which the series was engraved.[15] In a second print (**no. 27b**), although his human facade appears melancholic—with "a majestic and sad expression, preternaturally sad, in fact"[16] (perhaps identifying with the poet himself)—he is nevertheless the fearsome spirit intending to destroy humanity. In a third print, he appears to be manipulating with his hands, perhaps illustrating Baudelaire's preface: "The Devil sets our puppets' limbs to work..." In the fourth, he appears angry, with widened eyes and sharp teeth. The use of sharp clenched teeth to reveal aggression probably comes from other poems by Baudelaire, who uses it as a metaphor for torture:

> The Irreparable gnaws with cursèd fang
> Man's soul, that wretched monument,
> Often attacking, like a termite gang,
> The structure's base with sly intent.
> The Irreparable gnaws with cursèd fang![17]

This "mouth full of fangs," writes Bernard Dorival, "makes us think at once of the famous words of Saint Peter: '*Quarens quem devoret*' [seeking whom to devour]."[18]

The Skeleton. The next prominent figure in Rouault's *Les Fleurs du mal* is the skeleton image. Satan and skeleton are both images that appear in Rouault's work for the first time between 1918-1925.[19] One of the three skeleton prints (**no. 26e**) is titled *"Proud, as if a living being, of its noble stature...,"* quoting the opening line of the poem "Dance of Death." A dancing woman is likened to a corpse in fine clothing, reminding the reader of mortality.

> Proud of her graceful height as though alive,
> With scarf and gloves and hugest of bouquets,
> She has the nonchalance and shameless drive
> Of a lean flirt affecting lavish ways.
> ...
> In all climes, under all suns, Death attends-
> Amazed- your antics, droll Humanity;
> And, daubed like you with incense, often blends
> Her irony with your insanity![20]

Like Renaissance depictions of meditations on skulls, this is a reminder of the vanity of life.

Another print titled *Skeleton* (**no. 26h**) has its subject moving about, perhaps related either to "Dance of Death" or another poem titled "The Skeleton Digger." Here the poet envisions a corpse toiling on the land.

> Are you designed (you grim and plain
> Depictions of too stern a doom)
> To show that even in the tomb
> Our hopes of slumber may be vain;
> That we are cheated by the Void;
> That all things, even Death, deceive
> And that, alas! Without reprieve
> We may be forcibly employed
>
> In some land far from human heed
> At flaying the earth's resistant hide
> And driving heavy spades we guide
> Beneath our feet that naked bleed?[21]

Not only must life be endless toil and sorrow, but there will be no rest in the afterlife either. Even the promise of eternal rest is a lie told by Death.

The print titled *"Debauchery and Death..."* (**no. 26k**) shows debauchery and death as a skeleton couple with their fingers tightly joined together to show their strong connection, indicating the inevitable result of one to the other. The title is from the poem "The Two Good Sisters":

Debauch and Death are girls of genial mind,
Hearty in health, with many a kiss to spare,
Yet whose still-virgin loins, which
tatters bind,
Could never, despite endless labour, bear.
...
Foul-armed Debauch, when will you trench
me deep?
When will you, Death, who vie with her
to please,
Graft on lewd myrtles your dark
cypress-trees?[22]

Although Baudelaire does not depict these characters as cadavers, Rouault allegorizes them as skeletons, once again showing both the imminence and immanence of death, whether working, dancing, or being wasteful.

Women. Rouault portrays several women, including two nudes. Although Rouault had been depicting nudes since 1903, these nudes from the 1920s (**nos. 26i-j**) are more decorative: their emphatic sweeping lines accentuating the curvature of the bodies correspond to many lyrical renderings of female bodies in the poems. In Baudelaire, they are not only objects of pleasure, but also inspiration for the poet. He aspired to be lifted up from his spleen and from this mundane world, and delightful visions of women were one of the ways that temporarily allowed him to transcend his spiritual torpor. But women are also like the "ideal flower": beauty and death, ideal and spleen, are thoroughly intertwined.[23] He speaks of women with eyes that look like "two cold jewels" who charm their lovers like serpents dancing on the end of a staff.[24]

One of the nudes is entitled "*When you sleep, my dark beauty...*":

When, dusky beauty, you are lying at last
Beneath a jet-black marble monument,
Your mansion and your alcove no more vast
Than dripping vault's or shallow grave's
extent.
...
The tomb, which knows my vision's
boundless sweep
(For tombs well understand the poet's clan),
Shall ask on those long nights bereft of
sleep:
"What have you gained, imperfect
courtesan,
By never knowing what dead folk most
lament?"
—And worms shall, like remorse, wreak
chastisement.[25]

In addition to the nudes, Rouault depicts three women. The *Flower of Evil* (**no. 26f**) shows a woman with a glaring eye. Perhaps she is Baudelaire's "flower that is like my red ideal"—the blood-stained Lady Macbeth.

What such a heart profound as Hades needs
Is you, lady Macbeth, strong for dire deeds,
Aeschylean dream, reborn where Austers
blast;[26]

"It is a beautiful woman, richly dressed..." (**no. 26d**) displays a woman with sharp teeth, an image that suggests gnawing (as in the case of Satan's "fangs" above) as well as the possibility of sucking blood (as in the case of vampires):

You'd have the whole world in your
bed enrolled!
Lewd woman! Boredom makes you
sadist-souled.
To exercise your jaws in this weird sport,
Each day your manger some new heart
is brought.
...
Blind and deaf robot, fertile in cruel deeds!
Convenient tool, that sucks as the world
bleeds,
How can you feel no shame, nor mark
displayed
In every glass how your attractions fade?[27]

The title of this print comes from the poem "Allegory":

A glorious girl! Those withers are divine,
And that thick mane left trailing in
her wine.

The claws of love, the plagues that
thrive on sin,
All glance off, blunted, from her
granite skin.
She laughs at Death and mocks
Debauchery,
Whose hands, that scratch and scythe
unhaltingly,
Have in their crippling antics shown respect
For this form's simple grandeur,
firm, erect.[28]

The woman entitled "*Prostitution is aflame in the streets…*" (**no. 26g**) underscores the modernity of Baudelaire (and by extension, Rouault) since the image of the prostitute functioned as a metaphor of modernity in the nineteenth century.[29] The print's title quotes the poem "Evening Dusk," which showcases the approach of evening, the time when the people of the underworld start to move about, including burglars, criminals, and prostitutes. As Baudelaire links together the ultra-modern gas lighting of Parisian streets and the gleaming illumination of prostitution, we see his extreme modernity. But in the identification of this ephemeral scene with the ancient and eternal demon—"an enemy whose ambush is well-planned"—Baudelaire's verse exemplifies his own aesthetic definition of beauty as being "always and inevitably of a double composition…made up of *an eternal, invariable element*, whose quantity it is excessively difficult to determine, and of *a relative, circumstantial element*, which will be, if you like, whether several or all at once, the age, its fashions, its morals, its emotions."[30]

See the enchanted night, the felon's friend,
Complicity, with wolf-like tread, descend;
The sky's great alcove curtain off the day,
And restless men turn into beasts of prey.
…
By each pale gas-jet's wind-tormented torch
Along the streets now Prostitution gleams;
Like an ant's nest its every opening
streams;
It steals by secret routes to take its stand-
An enemy whose ambush is well-planned;
Through the vile city's bowels its coils
advance,
A tape-worm stealing Mankind's
sustenance.[31]

Curiously, this woman (presumably a prostitute) is not really distinguishable from the other two, i.e., bourgeois women with jewelry and adornments. Middle class women or whores, they are both muses and torturers, ideals and spleen, bringing inspiration as well as death to the poet.

Christ. Lastly, there are two images of Christ. The first (**no. 26l**) shows Christ at the scourging, flanked by a torturer with—once again—sharp teeth. The scene appears in Baudelaire's "The Denial of Saint Peter," which mocks Jesus for his devotion to God who completely rejects him at the cross, and applauds St. Peter for denying him.

—Ah! Jesus, call to mind that olive-grove!
Foolish, you knelt and prayed without avail
To Him who laughed on high to hear
each nail
Base butchers through your living
substance drove,

When you saw squalid cooks and soldiery
Spitting on your divinity their scorn,
And when you felt each deeply-thrusting
thorn
In that head harbouring vast Humanity;[32]

The theme of *Christ Mocked* is a very early one for Rouault (**no. 6**, *Christ Mocked*, 1905) and can be traced back to Manet as well as to late-medieval works. The figure of *Christ* with an aura of light around his head reveals the divinity that others mock and spit on without recognizing who it is they are denying.

II. *Miserere* (1927)

It might seem odd to claim *Les Fleurs du mal* as an influence on *Miserere*, since at first they seem diametrically different: the former focuses on Satan and damnation, the latter on Christ and salvation.

Yet the prominent themes of *Les Fleurs du mal* are evident throughout *Miserere*—evil, sin, death, and spleen—and, with the exception of death, Rouault had already been dealing with these subjects in his previous works for years. Indeed, he was severely criticized for what others saw as horror and darkness in his paintings.[33] In response to the damaging accusations (including being almost anti-Christian for focusing on the negative aspects of life) Jacques Rivère heard Rouault say, "Who knows whether I might not be preparing to paint a Combat between Virtue and Vice? If so, then shouldn't I study Vice?" Maintaining that "true Christianity permits all liberties," Rouault cited as historical evidence the grotesque sculptures of the Middle Ages.[34]

For Rouault, the depiction of evil and vice was not an end, but rather a means toward understanding the world and its need for salvation. The poetry of Baudelaire, in his mind, transformed these vague, abstract notions into living realities that permeate everyday life. The outbreak of war in 1914 and the subsequent wartime atrocities only confirmed these realities as an inescapable part of life.[35] Due to evil and sin in the world, Rouault cries out: *Miserere*—"Have Mercy, oh Lord." *Miserere* in that sense is the answer to the all the depravity and spleen, as well as the thirst and search for the spiritual. For Rouault, the two print albums *Les Fleurs du Mal* and *Miserere* were closely linked to each other not only because he worked on them simultaneously, but also in their deeper meanings.

Skeletons. The most obvious and explicit of the influences of *Les Fleurs du mal* on *Miserere* is the inclusion of the skeletons. In *Miserere*, the skeletons occur only in the second half of the series—that is, the half entitled *Guerre* (*War*). In **no. 27kk**, Rouault uses a skeleton to illustrate a line from Plautus: *Man is wolf to man.* (After the Second World War, Rouault illustrates the same line in a monumental painting with a man hanging from a noose.) In *"On your feet, dead men!"* Rouault plays with ambiguity (**no. 27bbb**). Three crosses in the background suggest that this could be the apocalypse, explaining why the three skeletons (one wearing an army hat) are being raised from the dead. The phrase, however, is a bitterly ironic one that was used to send World War I soldiers up over the trenches and (most likely) into the line of fire. Thus, they might not be rising from the dead so much as going to their deaths. The legend for **no. 27vv**—*Death took him as he arose from his bed of nettles*—comes from one of Rouault's own poems titled "The Artist" (1914). Written during a period of crushing poverty for Rouault's family (i.e., before Ambroise Vollard brought him some financial security), the poem narrates an artist's entry into the blissful land of heaven after much suffering during his earthly journey.[36] Like Baudelaire, Rouault conveys the immediacy of death, the reality of mortality creeping at all corners of life. Death is everywhere due to war, but is also an inevitable fact of life—these skeletons are all walking and moving about, immanent in the living.

Women. War continues its presence through its allegorical figure in **no. 27xx** entitled "*Tooth and nail*" (literally: with claws and beak). She resembles the *beautiful woman with rich appearance* in Rouault's *Fleurs du mal* (**no. 26d**), whose sharp teeth express the destructive power of women. Both have the same closed eyes, square noses, firm shoulders, and round breasts. Like the prostitute in *Fleurs du mal* (**no. 26g**), the *Miserere* prostitute (**no. 27r**) (*Girl said to be joy*) seems no different from the proud and refined bourgeois women (**nos. 27t** and **27u**)—the *Emancipated Woman* and the woman who believes she has *a reserved place in heaven*. In fact, the woman in **no. 27s** (*In a mouth which was once fresh, the taste of bitterness*) has been taken for both a bourgeois woman as well as a prostitute. All these women are power figures who can either exacerbate suffering or bring peace in the world.

Satan. Satan does not appear explicitly in *Miserere*. Rouault originally intended to include images of Satan and he actually produced several plates with the image of Satan. However, limited by time and old age in 1948, he decided not to include them in the final publication. Among those rejected plates is one titled, *If you have allowed your field to be sown by Satan* and another, *Go back Satan.*[37] Similar to Rouault's *Les Fleurs du mal*, these represent Satan as a human being with no distinguishable traits that would reveal his true nature.

However, despite the lack of an explicitly represented Satan, one could argue that he is the underlying cause, power, and drive behind the scenes of chaos, conflict, and war. He manipulates those in power—for example, the proud general in *"The nobler the heart, the less stiff the collar"*—to bring destruction in the world (**no. 27ww**). This destroyed landscape can be seen in *My sweet country, where are you?* (**no. 27rr**). If one accepts this implicit presence of Satan, then Rouault would seem to be making a claim similar to that made by Georges Bernanos (also in 1927): the unprecedented destruction and horror of World War I could only have been the work of a proportionately powerful evil force.[38]

Spleen. For Baudelaire, the world ruled by Satan is the world of "spleen" described in detail in a poem with that title:

> When, like a lid, low leaden clouds oppress
> The groaning mind on which long
> sorrows prey,
> And, turning the whole scene horizonless,
> They pour-more dour than night—a
> murky day;
> When all the earth like some dark
> cell appals,
> Where Hope flits restless, like a bat it
> seems,
> Bruising its timid wings against the walls
> And striking with its head the rotted
> beams;
> …
> —And long corteges lacking tune or drum
> File slowly through my soul; Hope,
> vanquished quite,
> Well tears; while Anguish, heinous tyrant
> glum,
> Plants on my drooping head its flag
> of night.[39]

The atmosphere of "spleen" is largely absent in Rouault's *Les Fleurs du mal*, as Rouault foremost aimed at creating a visual parallel to Baudelaire's poetic lyricism, even as he dealt with horrendous subjects and themes. However, "spleen" seems to pervade *Miserere*: the same groaning spirit, great anxieties, sense of hopelessness, and the overpowering effect of melancholy can be seen in any number of plates. The pervasive dark backgrounds which Rouault tirelessly reworked seem to echo Baudelaire's dark sky, and lonely figures, standing or walking with their eyes closed, evoke Baudelaire's slow hearses.

"Spleen" can be seen in several populated landscape scenes: in the tropical *land of thirst and fear* (**no. 27m**); in the rural landscape of the sower attempting to seed the *hostile earth* (**no. 27p**); in the wintry scene *winter plague of the earth* (**no. 27q**); and in the urban landscape of the *street of the lonely* (**no. 27i**). Rouault's earth echoes that described in Baudelaire's poem, *De profundis clamavi*:[40]

> In this bleak universe's leaden sky
> Nothing but blasphemies and horrors move.
> A glacial sun gleams wanly half my year,
> In other months unbroken darkness reigns;
> These lands are drearier than polar plains,
> —No beast or stream or tree or
> verdure here![41]

In addition to the landscapes, individuals who do not have specific reasons for their melancholy also seem to share in this ubiquitous "spleen": *Alone, in this life of pitfalls and malice* (**no. 27h**); *Are we not all galley slaves?* (**no. 27e**); *The hard metier of living* (**no. 27n**); and *Jean-François never sings Alleluia* (**no. 27l**). In his poem "The Voyage," Baudelaire lays out the eternal pervasiveness of "spleen" by mischievously playing on the Catholic distinction between "venial" and "mortal" sin:

> Lest we forget the main point of our tale,
> We found, unsearching, in all lands akin,
> From top to bottom of the fateful scale,
> The tedious pageant of immortal sin:…[42]

Christ. It goes without saying that if "spleen" is ubiquitous in *Miserere*, the figure of Christ is even more so. The figure of Christ Mocked in *Les Fleurs du mal* reappears in the first three plates of the *Miserere*—on the frontispiece, as *Jesus reviled* (**no. 27b**) and *forever scourged* (**no. 27c**)—as well as in *He was oppressed and afflicted…*(**no. 27y**).

Additionally, he appears crucified on a cross in four more plates. Perhaps more importantly for Rouault, however, is the way in which Christ—like Satan—is a transcendental presence immanent in everyday life. He assumes the figures of the *poor wanderer* (**no. 27d**), the *condemned man* (cf. **nos. 27v** and **27y**), the *crushed grape* (**no. 27uu**), the moment of revelation (**no. 27ff**); and—most significantly—Veronica's veil (**nos. 27gg, 27hh, 27tt,** and **27fff**).

The centrality of Christ for Rouault was expressed by André Malraux in 1929: "There is no work today more stripped of love than the profane work of this Christian painter; as if love, for the one who maintains the kinds of connections with the world that are Rouault's, could only express itself in the figure of Christ.... Christ — and not God—delivers those who believe in him from the absurd."[43]

III. Final Benediction

The image that holds together the unwieldy *Miserere* is the Face of Christ imprinted on Veronica's Veil. In the end, the final words of the series come from *Isaiah*: "It is through his wounds that we are healed." For Rouault, there can be no redemption without suffering.[44] In this he shared common ground with the vision laid out in Baudelaire's "Benediction":

> "Bless you, O Lord," he cries, "for
> sending pain,
> That divine cure for our impurities,
> Most sure and true elixir which can gain
> The strong a foretaste of heaven's
> ecstasies!"[45]

In the modern world of positivism, technology, and laicism, such accounts of the spiritual world—and great accounts, too—were daring and remarkable. They made the spiritual world palpable, vibrant in the grind of daily living and in the midst of the material world. It was not unreasonable for Rouault to call himself Baudelaire's "soul-brother," for their works testified to the same aspirations: "The smile of a soul-brother is enough, perhaps, for you to battle once more against the tide of distress."[4]

Endnotes

1 "*Je m'estimerai heureux si l'on peut dire de ces gravures que je suis un peu dans l'atmosphère du poème, non comme un serviteur trop scrupuleux, désireux de commenter le texte mais comme un frère modeste et compréhensif.*" Rouault cited in François Chapon and Isabelle Rouault, *Rouault: œuvre gravé,* 2 vols. (Monte-Carlo: Éditions André Sauret, 1978) 12. On the *Fleurs du mal* project see Chapon and Rouault, *Œuvre gravé,* 41-46; and Bernard Dorival and Isabelle Rouault, *Rouault: l'œuvre peint,* 2 vols. (Monte-Carlo: Éditions André Sauret, 1988) 273-274, 347.

2 The fourteen black and white plates of the *Fleurs du mal* were not published until 1966 as Georges Rouault, Jacques Guignard, and Charles Baudelaire, *Rouault: quatorze planches gravées pour Les Fleurs du mal & XXX lithographies originales* (Paris: L'Étoile filante, 1966). For analysis and reproductions see Chapon and Rouault, *Œuvre gravé* 2:41-46, 83-122. In addition to those fourteen, there were also twelve unpublished color engravings produced between 1936 and 1938 included in this exhibition. For the sources and development of *Miserere*, see *Rouault: oeuvre gravé,* 1:70-75; and Soo Kang, "'In the deep furrow': Rouault's Views on Life and Suffering," *This Anguished World of Shadows: Georges Rouault's Miserere et Guerre,* eds. Holly Flora and Soo Yun Kang (London: Gilles, 2006) 25-47. For the multiple projects of 1927-1928, see *Rouault: oeuvre gravé*, 1:60-61.

3 On Bloy and Huysmans, see Kang, "In the deep furrow" 42-43; and Soo Yun Kang, *Rouault in Perspective: Contextual and Theoretical Study of His Art* (New York: University Press of America, 2000) 33-37, 51-52, 97-111, 168-73, 178-187.

4 Chapon and Rouault, *Œuvre gravé* 2:41; and Waldemar George and Geneviève Nouaille-Rouault, *L'Univers de Rouault* (Paris: Screpel, 1971) 17.

5 Georges Rouault, *Souvenirs intimes* (Paris: Frapier, 1926) 63-65.

6 "Un Baudelaire, un Verlaine, s'ils vous paraissent tombés si bas, gardent sur ceux-là qui les entourent, les flattent, les censurent or croient devoir les tutoyer, une telle distinction naturelle, un tel parfum et tel bouquet de vin spirituel, qu'il leur suffit d'un mot ou d'un regard pour mettre toute chose à son plan" (*Souvenirs intimes*, 65).

7 Charles Baudelaire, *The Complete Poems of Baudelaire*, trans. Philip Higson and Elliot R. Ashe (Chester, UK: Limouse Museum Publications, 1992) xxxiv-xxxv.

8 Joanna Richardson, *Baudelaire* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994) 262.

9 Baudelaire, "To the Reader," in Higson and Ashe, 1-2; "Au lecteur," *Baudelaire: oeuvres complètes*, vol. 1, ed. Claude Pichois (Paris: Gallimard, 1975-1976) 5-6.

10 Stephen Schloesser, S.J., "From Spiritual Naturalism to Psychical Naturalism: Catholic Decadence, Lutheran Munch, and Madone Mystérique," *Edvard Munch: Psyche, Symbol, Expression*, ed. Jeffery Howe (Chestnut Hill: McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College, 2001) 75-110. See esp. 81-83.

11 Baudelaire, "Destruction," in Higson and Ashe 121; "La Destruction," *Baudelaire: oeuvres complètes* 111.

12 Stephen Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism: Mystic Modernism in Postwar Paris, 1919-1933* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 2005) 39-41; Ellis Hanson, *Decadence and Catholicism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); Richard Griffiths, *The Reactionary Revolution: The Catholic Revival in French Literature, 1870-1914* (London: Constable, 1966).

13 Baudelaire, "Spleen," in Higson and Ashe 79-80; "Spleen," *Baudelaire: oeuvres complètes* 73.

14 "When, in 1966, Geneviève Nouaille and Isabelle Rouault, the artist's daughters, published Rouault's fourteen plates for *Les Fleurs du Mal*, without any precise means of knowing exactly which text went with which image, they justified their selection on the basis of their personal memories: 'Over the years we saw Baudelaire's *Petits Poèmes en Prose* on his bedside table, long before *Les Fleurs du mal*.

"'Our choice of poems was therefore guided by what our father himself told us: titles, rarely written down but heard hundreds of times, verses, that he loved to read to us again and again. Could it be that the images evoked in him were a response to the poet's message rather than to the music of the long, perhaps soon-forgotten stanzas?'" Chapon and Rouault, *Œuvre gravé* 2:41.

15 In April 1926, Georges Bernanos's novel *Under Satan's Sun* was published in Jacques Maritain's *Roseau d'Or* series and immediately provoked a literary uproar. In his attack on Bernanos's "strange devil," Paul Souday, a preeminent critic of the day, quipped that he did not "doubt that in the present time one encounters the devil almost daily on the auto-routes. Obviously, *c'est la vie*." See Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 245-281; and Georges Bernanos, *Essais et écrits de combat / Bernanos*, pres. Yves Bridel, Jacques Chabot, and Joseph Jurt; under the direction of Michel Estève, vol. 1 (Paris: Gallimard, 1971-1995) 1649-1652.

16 Dorival and Rouault, *l'Œuvre peint* 274.

17 Baudelaire, "The Irreparable," in Higson and Ashe 61; "L'Irréparable," *Baudelaire: oeuvres complètes* 55.

18 Dorival and Rouault, *l'Œuvre peint* 274; citing Epistle of St. Peter 5:8.

19 See plate nos. 1144-1161 in *Rouault: oeuvre peint,* 326-329.

20 Baudelaire, "Dance of Death," in Higson and Ashe 105-107; "Danse macabre," *Baudelaire: oeuvres complètes* 96-98.

21 Baudelaire, " The Digging Skeleton," in Higson and Ashe 101-102; "Le Squelette laboureur," *BOC* 93-94

22 Baudelaire, "Two Kind Sisters," in Higson and Ashe 131; "Les Deux bonnes soeurs," *Baudelaire: oeuvres complètes* 114-115.

23 Natasha Grigorian, "The Writings of J.-K. Huysmans and Gustave Moreau's Painting: Affinity or Divergence?" *Nineteenth-Century French Studies* 32.3-4 (Spring-Summer 2004): 282-97. For Baudelaire, see 285 and 296n4.

24 Baudelaire, "The Dancing Snake," in Higson and Ashe, 29-30; "Le Serpent qui danse," *Baudelaire: oeuvres complètes* 30.

25 Baudelaire, "Posthumous Remorse," in Higson and Ashe 35-36; "Remords posthume," *Baudelaire: oeuvres complètes* 34.

26 Baudelaire, "Ideal," in Higson and Ashe 19-20; "L'Idéal" *Baudelaire: oeuvres complètes* 22.

27 Baudelaire, "The Chevelure," in Higson and Ashe, 25; "La Chevelure," *Baudelaire: oeuvres complètes* 27. Compare "The Vampire" and "The Vampire's Metamomorphoses" (33; 134); "Le Vampire" and "Les Métamorphoses du vampire" (33; 159).

28 Baudelaire, "Allegory," in Higson and Ashe 132; "Allégorie," *Baudelaire: oeuvres complètes* 116.

29 See the essay by Mary Louise Roberts in the present volume. For additional bibliography, see Maurice Samuels, "Metaphors of Modernity: Prostitutes, Bankers, and other Jews in Balzac's *Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes*," *The Romanic Review* 97/2 (March 2006): 169-184; and Timothy J. Gilfoyle, "Prostitutes in History: From Parables of Pornography to Metaphors of Modernity," *The American Historical Review* 104/1 (February 1999): 117-141.

30 Baudelaire extended this double composition to the definition of "modernity" itself: "By 'modernity,' I mean the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent, the half of art whose other half is the eternal and the immutable.... This transitory, fugitive element, whose metamorphoses are so rapid, must on no account be dispensed with. By neglecting it, you cannot fail to tumble into the abyss of an abstract and indeterminate beauty..." Baudelaire, "The Painter of Modern Life" (1863), *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*, trans. Jonathan Mayne (London: Phaidon Press Ltd., 1963) 3, 13; Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 166.

31 Baudelaire, " Evening Twilight," in Higson and Ashe 103-104.; "Le Crépuscule du soir," *Baudelaire: oeuvres complètes* 94-95.

32 Baudelaire, "St. Peter's Denial," in Higson and Ashe 139-140; "Le Reniement de Saint Pierre," *Baudelaire: oeuvres complètes* 121-122. There are allegorical imageries and references to Christ throughout Baudelaire's work. See Kang, *Rouault in Perspective*, 213-218.

33 For some of the early criticisms including those of Léon Bloy, see Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 214-220, 222-227; and Pierre Courthion, *Rouault* (New York: Abrams, 1962) 102-106.

34 André Lhote, Alain-Fournier and Jacques Rivière, *La Peinture, le coeur, l'esprit: correspondance inédite 1907-1924*, vol. 1 (Bordeaux: Musée des Beaux-Arts, 1986) 85.

35 See Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 85-86. See also Jeff Lipkes, *Rehearsals: The German Army in Belgium, August 1914* (Belgium: Leuven Univ. Press, 2007); John Horne and Alan Kramer, *German Atrocities, 1914: A History of Denial* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001). For artistic representations, see George Bellows, *George Bellows and the war series of 1918* (New York: Hirschl and Adler, 1983).

36 Georges Rouault, "La mort l'a pris comme il sortait du lit d'orties," from "Trois petits poèmes," *Les Soirées de Paris* 26/27 (1914); reprinted in Georges Rouault, *Sur l'art et sur la vie* (Paris: Denoël, 1971) 146-47.

37 For these and other rejected prints, see Chapon and Rouault, *Œuvre gravé* 1: 316-323.

38 Bernanos's lecture, "Une Vision catholique du réel" [A Catholic Vision of the Real] was given at the Conférences Cardinal Mercier in Brussels on March 15, 1927 and published a month later in *La Revue générale* of Brussels 60 (April 15, 1927): 393-409; and in the *Revue catholique des idées et faits* (April 22-29, 1927). See Bernanos, *Essais et écrits de combat* vol. 1, 1074-1089. Rouault would undoubtedly have known of this from Jacques Maritain.

39 Baudelaire, "Spleen," in Higson and Ashe 81; "Spleen," *Baudelaire: oeuvres complètes* 74-75.

40 Quoting the Vulgate translation of Psalm 130: *De profundis clamavi ad te Domine* [Out of the depths I have cried to Thee, O Lord].

41 Baudelaire, "I Cried from the Depths," in Higson and Ashe 32; "De produndis clamavi," *Baudelaire: oeuvres complètes* 32-33.

42 Baudelaire, "The Voyage," in Higson and Ashe 148-54; "Le Voyage," *Baudelaire: oeuvres complètes* 129-134.

43 Malraux concluded: "At the heart of his work, Rouault is like Rimbaud at the center of his *Illuminations*. Both tell God that they do not accept his universe. But Rimbaud is large-spirited enough to respect a silence in which the final heroes spit in each other's faces, while Rouault's God answers him that there is *also* Satan." André Malraux, "Un homme qui 'est.' Notes sur l'expression tragique en peinture," *Formes* 1 (December 1929): 5-6; repr. in *XXe Siècle*, special issue "Hommage à Georges Rouault" (1971): 31-32; repr. in *Rouault: première periode, 1903-1920*, ed. Fabrice Hergott (Paris: Musee national d'art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, 1992); Schloesser, *Jazz Age* 243-44. Emphasis added. Translation altered.

44 On Rouault's views, see Kang, *Rouault in Perspective*, 168-185.

45 Baudelaire, "Benediction," in Higson and Ashe 3-5; "Bénédiction," *Baudelaire: oeuvres complètes* 7-9.

46 Rouault, preface to Georges Rouault, Jacques Guignard, and Charles Baudelaire, *Rouault: quatorze planches gravées pour Les Fleurs du mal & XXX lithographies originales* (Paris: L'Étoile filante, 1966); in Dorival and Rouault, *l'Œuvre peint* 1:327. Compare Rouault's remarks in *Souvenirs intimes* (1926): "Peut-être vous eût-il suffi, Baudelaire, d'avoir le sourire affectueux d'un frère en esprit, pour remonter le courant des peines" (*Souvenirs intimes*, 65).

The Aesthetics of Shock: Baudelaire, Benjamin, Rouault

Susan A. Michalczyk

Yes, you—you hypocrite—my next of kin!
(Artistic blasphemy, sadistic shock !...
Tomorrow she will have to live again !
Tomorrow, and from there on out. Like us !)
—Charles Baudelaire

[Baudelaire] indicated the price for which
the sensation of the modern age may be had:
the disintegration of the aura
in the experience of shock.
—Walter Benjamin

Behind our glittering masks,
we all hide a tormented soul, a tragedy...
—Georges Rouault[1]

In a study of Charles Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du mal* (Flowers of Evil), the critic Walter Benjamin examines what he calls the poetics of shock. Here Benjamin sees the poet metaphorically interpreting the desolated masses of Paris of the Second Empire: "The mass was the agitated veil; through it Baudelaire saw Paris."[2] Deep within Baudelaire's memory lies a "profoundly sorrowful experience...his form of suffering-spleen, the taedium vitae [world-weariness]" that Benjamin considers a disguise for the poet's torment: "a mask behind which he tried to conceal—out of shame, one might say—the supra-individual necessity of his way of life and, to a certain extent, his fate."[3]

Georges Rouault absorbed much from Baudelaire that he then integrated with his own personal experience of Paris, as witness and survivor of the disappointments and pain at the turn of the last century, revealing in his artwork, a heightened sensitivity and connection between the inner and outer worlds of

human experience. Likewise, in his disturbing portrayals of the most wretched among us, Rouault vividly interprets the poetic explosion of passion and horror amid the natural and unnatural elements of Shakespeare's darkest tragedy, *King Lear*. In fact, Rouault had discovered both Baudelaire and Shakespeare at the same time—in the personal library of his mentor, Gustave Moreau.[4]

Rouault's subjects, rejected by the world and stripped of all disguises, as mirrored in Christ's own suffering, reflect the anguished cry of the tragic King Lear on his descent into madness:

> Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,...Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel.
> (III .iv. ll.28, 34)

It is this compulsive need to expose, explain, and interpret the wretchedness of suffering humanity that becomes the focus of Rouault's *forme et fond*.[5] Through the captions of his artwork, Rouault dares to present his own torment, along with the suffering behind Baudelaire's mask of despair, as a testament to the universal experience: "Behind our glittering masks, we all hide a tormented soul, a tragedy."[6]

Rouault mirrors Baudelaire's deep connection to the "lamentable beings who live on the margin of contemporary society," losing himself in the tragedy of human experience, "in the depth-dimensions of human existence," in order to more fully comprehend "a reality masked by appearances."[7] With profound sensitivity, Rouault intertwines exterior and interior experience, the physical scars with the psychological, forcing the observer and the observed into a forceful and traumatic encounter with that suffering which leads to awareness. Rouault's paintings unmask the hypocrisy of a society condemned to consume and destroy an eagerness to forsake its own humanity by "getting and spending." His insistence on presenting the sentiments and the souls of those ravaged by misguided greed and distorted human understanding compels acknowledgment that indeed "we have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!"[8] Through the removal of the mask, the glitter and the grease paint, Rouault succeeds in revealing Benjamin's assessment of the trauma of the gaze, disintegrating, emanating from human eyes as if metaphors that define the internalized suffering of the ravaged remains of the downtrodden masses.[9]

However, where Baudelaire arrives only at torment and death in such mystery, Rouault discovers strength and redemption. With deliberate intention, Rouault paints his subjects to "show the heavens more just," as if in response to Lear's painful realization of man's wretchedness: "Is man no more than this?"[10]

Synesthesia and Correspondence: Blurring the Senses

Synesthesia, Baudelaire's poetic device to heighten sensory experience, serves as a metaphor for Rouault's own encounter with a flooding of all the senses. In her text, *Word/ Image/ Psyche*, Bettina Knapp discusses the almost mystical level of awareness that results in the poet's correspondences: "Synesthesia implies a correspondence among the senses....Baudelaire experienced synesthesia as a great awakening, a psychic happening within his unconscious that affected his nervous system, either soothing or shattering it. It also enabled him to experience simultaneity of sense impressions in a timeless dimension...and in his *Salon of 1846* Baudelaire first mentioned his theory of correspondences, an amplification of the synesthetic experience."[11]

Rouault transforms Baudelaire's poetic images, which shun classical beauty and idealized renderings of love, into visual assaults of bourgeois brutality and decadence. More than purely a literary technique, synesthesia—as expressed in the poetry of *Spleen et idéal* or as reinterpreted visually in the works of Rouault—can be seen as a release of stored traumatic experience and awareness from the deepest recesses of tragic memory. Rouault creates a similar series of sense impressions hidden behind the masks of the vilified and scorned: prostitutes and clowns, sideshow freaks and saltimbanques, the remnants of slaughtered humanity and divinity. In his paintings, Rouault assumes

his vocation as artist, messenger, revealer of the most sacred and universal experience of suffering that offers redemption. Rouault witnesses tremendous suffering and disappointment and yet, unlike Baudelaire, he does not fall victim to the trauma, remain entangled in the hypocrisy of the masses, or get swallowed up by despair. Rouault paints a strikingly similar synesthetic response to his personal experience of human suffering. With powerful brush strokes of a most penetrating darkness, Rouault focuses upon the expression of feelings, the scarred features revealed from deep within the souls of his prostitutes and clowns, his suffering Christ, and defiled victims of war.

Shock: Disrupting the Senses

Rouault's frequent depictions of clowns and prostitutes clearly portray the emotional scars of faded beauty succumbing to physical decay. This is most evident in his 1906 painting of the *Prostitute at Her Mirror,* which depicts her persona unmasked in her mirror (see Roberts essay, fig. 3). A subject of interest to Baudelaire as well in *Les Fleurs du mal*, prostitutes reflect the hypocrisy within society, and the degradation and corruption of the human spirit. Abused and discarded, prostitutes represent another example of the wretchedness and vulnerability in bourgeois society of France, looked down upon in judgment.[12] In his stark depiction of the woman's profile, however, Rouault first allows us to gaze at her, and then as the viewer takes in the reflection from the mirror, Rouault forces us to enter into the discomfort of the prostitute's experience as the viewer becomes the viewed.

This graphic display of vulnerability and shame recalls the insignificance of humanity, as portrayed in the wretchedness of *King Lear,*[13] as well as the brokenness of the human condition in Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du mal.*[14] In the closing lines of *King Lear*, after the death and desolation, the descent into chaos and the final unmasking of all disguise, Shakespeare reveals the powerful *correspondence* between the senses, as Edgar, at last unmasked and fully aware, offers a profound reflection:

> Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say…we that are young
> Shall never see so much, nor live so long.
> (V .iii .ll.326-328)

Words of soothing consolation or melancholic despair, for those who remain, surrounded by the dead though devastated from extreme suffering and sorrow, intermingle the senses in the command: *speak, feel, see.* Whether in the literary form of Shakespeare or Baudelaire or in the artistic expression of Rouault, the most sought after, yet frequently the most bittersweet, experience is the moment of transcendence. The desired goal, to see more clearly with the heart and to encounter true sensibility and understanding of the human condition offers paradoxical results within the human spirit: consolation or desolation, hope, or despair. The intensity of such shock, *surprise fatale*, initially overwhelms the senses, and keener awareness only occurs in the transformation of sensations as pure memory into a narrative of substance. Traumatic rupturing of the human psyche can lead to integration of the self or complete disintegration.[15] Rouault does not succumb to the despair that surrounds his world, and eventually succeeds in finding meaning as he confronts and abandons all disguises. Ironically, Baudelaire, whose literary works "fertilized the ground of the collective unconscious…and provided elaboration and support of mystical, decadent, antibourgeois attitudes"[16] to Rouault, cannot escape from the intoxicating effects of the Belle Époque. Such violent disruption of the senses as expressed in Baudelaire's poetry of *Les Fleurs du mal* as well as in Lear's tragic existence emerges with modern[17] clarity and intention in the haunting artistry of Rouault, who captures the wretchedness of humanity's lost soul with empathy and compassion.

Dédoublement: Shock of Self-Recognition

Rouault relies upon repetition of subject, of broken posture, of complicit gaze, so as to present a visual expression of the heightened awareness achieved by Baudelaire's literary *dédoublement*,

"the ability to be self and other…a shared, human predicament, as well as the founding principle of art."[18] Throughout much of his early work, Rouault seems to pattern himself upon Baudelaire's perception of the artist as *flaneür*, observer of despair, witness to the atrocities and cruelty, but not quite ready to enter fully into the trauma and be consumed as participant in the abyss of human suffering. And yet, over time, Rouault accepts the more challenging and more demanding role of expressing the inner world of intense experience and traumatic feeling, as he redefines and reinterprets Baudelaire's challenge to the artist, to "be a 'double,' an active participant in the turmoil of his inner world and simultaneously a detached observer of the drama that surrounds him. The consequence of this opposition is the work of art, an act of redemption by its very existence."[19]

In depiction after depiction of violated humanity, the haunting expressions and the twisted postures of these lowly servants, exploited by society's insatiable need to feed off others to fulfill its own pleasures in order to mask the pain and torment of life, Rouault captures the essence of *the difficult profession of living* with an even more modern interpretation of the aesthetics of shock. He does so in order to not let humanity forget a world "where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies/ Where but to think is to be full of sorrow/ And leaden-eyed despairs."[20]

Blending allegory and personal experience, Rouault creates haunting images of clowns, peasants, and prostitutes in moments of dejection and vulnerability, as well as judges, kings and members of the bourgeoisie, who also display a weariness and woundedness in a violent world.[21] Rouault begins painting a vast array of similarly themed subjects from 1902 onward; the parts come together as a powerful lamentation of the human condition, in the *Miserere* series (1912-1927) with the central images of the suffering Christ and Veronica's veil (**nos. 27ii** and **27fff**) providing consolation and redemption. Rouault's insistence on redemption through suffering replaces the chaos and despair of Shakespeare's tragic world of Lear and transcends the feelings of disgust and judgment toward the world, as evidenced in Baudelaire's use of the terms *souvenirs* and *spleen*. In all of his artwork, Rouault reinforces that behind the mask, when the grease-paint or sweat is wiped away, clown or Christ, all bear witness to the same shared experience of humility and anguish. Although considered an artist in the Catholic tradition, Rouault does not hesitate to explore the underbelly of French society in the first part of the twentieth century, presenting the harsh reality of these marginalized women and tragic clowns, à la Pierrot, behind whose eyes he still sees the Suffering Servant.[22]

The importance of such a solid connection with and identification of all humanity emerges as a unifying and dominant theme in Rouault's expansive images, symbolically portrayed in the *unmasking* of torment that cuts across gender and class, from the most insignificant and devalued prostitute and clown, to the aged king and the King of Kings. These are all literal reminders of Rouault's fundamental belief that in wiping away that which distorts and hides our most authentic self from one other, we are sustained by the essence of what is revealed as we dare to gaze inward.

Ironically, Baudelaire, though a master of *correspondences* and *dédoublement*, never achieves his final act of redemption and is ultimately destroyed by the forces of violence and betrayal of his times, unable to free himself from what becomes his self-fulfilling prophecy of the poet as victim and executioner.[23] In spite of his equally deliberate study of the pain and disgust of existence, Rouault escapes Baudelaire's overwhelming sensations and perceptions of disgust and despair, as he transitions from the role of documenting—both historical experience (Paris at the turn of the last century) and literary experience (Baudelaire's *Spleen et idéal* and *Les Fleurs du mal*) of the promenade, the cafes, the prostitutes, the circus life, "the great temple of ugliness so necessary to man's search for beauty"[24]—to elevating the city and its teeming residents from a deadened and deadly trance-like state to a more meaningful and more balanced awareness of the human condition.

Rouault sympathizes with Baudelaire's critical assessment of the growth of modern Paris, filled with ambivalence about "the daily shocks and conflicts of civilization,"[25] and "his experience of the

crowd (which) bore the traces of the 'heartache and the thousand natural shocks' which a pedestrian suffers in the bustle of a city and which keep his self-awareness all the more alert."[26] However, unlike Baudelaire, who is seduced by the disguises and lies of humanity and repeatedly terrorized by the revelations, shocked by the truth behind the mask, Rouault transforms the isolated experience of horror and despair of prostitute, clown, and poet into a shared identification of suffering through his recurring image and references to the suffering Christ, whose mask when wiped away, reveals understanding, connection, and redemption. "Rouault applied himself 'to transpose humanity' within a context that was 'comical, *hallucinant*, and filled with pathos.'"[27]

Both Baudelaire and Rouault suffer through extreme harshness and brutality, as expressed in their artistry. Both are sensitive souls, irrevocably scarred by the violence and hypocrisy of a deceitful and decadent world and yet each differs in the artistic vision and in the understanding of artist. However, Baudelaire dissolves into the dust, the ashes, and the decay of a dying world, establishing himself as witness (hopeless victim and artist) to the parasitic and unnatural relationship that isolates, torments, and ultimately dooms both city and its inhabitants.

> I am a graveyard, hated by the moon,
> Where worms, with dust I loved, hold intercourse,
> From now on we'll be petrified, a stone,
> Buried in apprehension, flesh and bone,...[28]

In stark contrast to such a pain-filled vision of humanity as an intoxicated "crowd,"[29] Rouault gains strength and purpose as he reconciles his paradoxical position of powerlessness and extreme power as empathic witness (redeemed victim and artist) to those marginalized and broken souls who felt abandoned by heaven and earth,[30] as if regaining a sense of balance and hope in his artistic representations of masked humanity.

Shock of Recognition: Face of Christ Un/Masked

In his study of the tradition and place of icons in Byzantine and early Christianity, Robin Cormack notes the complexities of attempting to portray the face of Christ and the centrality of the iconic image of Christ: "The face of Christ had to be a mask. Each artist had to offer both an answer and a continuing element of mystery."[31] Rouault's references to the unmasked Christ, revealed in all his suffering, simultaneously focuses on the consolation and comfort of the representation of Veronica's Veil. Rouault cleverly combines the many layers of meaning in the traditional symbolism of the mask: in the imagery of clowns and grease-paint and prostitutes and make-up, the Pierrot and the courtesan, with the Byzantine icon which "has come down to us as a silent witness of a huge range of emotions and experiences....Sometimes, icons were 'working' images at moments of the greatest emotion; sometimes, they were the delicate invitation to aesthetic experience."[32]

In similar fashion, Rouault takes upon himself the role of "silent witness" to the human condition, supported by his strong belief in the connection between the most sacred and most profane. As artist and witness, Rouault shares in the experience of compassion and consolation: first in his depiction of Veronica, wiping away the suffering from Christ's face; then, in the blood and sorrowful image, the depth of human suffering transformed. This shock of recognition reconciles the traumatic memory with the meaninglessness of misery.

Rouault, ever the master craftsman, aware of his calling, selects the iconic mask of Christ in order to offer reassurance of humanity's inextricable link with the transcendent. Stephen Schloesser, discussing the concept of sacramentalism as "masked redemption," addresses Rouault's ability to infuse a decrepit humanity with aspects of the divinity:

> both genuine change in something
> and a simultaneous conservation of
> that original thing.... The appeal to
> "transformation" and "transposition" also
> evoked "transubstantiation": that is, a

> thing's genuine self-transcendence even as it preserves itself; a genuine change made possible because of potential already possessed.[33]

In his depictions of authentic suffering joined to the suffering Christ and the depiction of Veronica's veil alongside the dying and the wretched, Rouault suggests there could be meaning, perhaps ultimate *mercy*, in the senselessness of our *misery*. Quite effectively, Rouault continues to rely on the foundational concepts of the icon (*vera icon*) as to his profound decision to focus on and then replicate Veronica's veil repeatedly, over and over and over again (**nos. 27gg, 27hh, 27ss, 27tt, 27fff, 71, 72, 75-77**).

Shared *Decrepitude:* Artistic Blasphemy, Sadistic Shock

Rouault's own memories, the moments and sensations of incomprehensible suffering layered upon equally profound experiences of sudden awareness and healing, provide the inspiration for his painting: "He was to spend the rest of his life drawing upon memories, from the time of his birth under bombardment during the Commune to the time when the snow-clad landscape helped him to recover from the depression caused by the death of his teacher.... Recalling past times permitted him to look at life from a certain distance as if he were looking at its reflection in a mirror-the mirror also held up by his models."[34] Through his empathic perception of the oppressive nature of suffering, Rouault re-examines "the hypocrisy and horror of man's fate,"[35] painfully detailed by Baudelaire as he lost himself in "the indefinable city, in the metaphysical suffering so joined with daily anguish of the most commonplace kind."[36] And just as Rouault's modern interpretation of art is bound to the classical tradition of icon and mask, so too, Benjamin's Baudelaire "insists that modernity is bound to the classical through a shared decrepitude, by a 'mourning for what was and lack of hope for what is to come.'...Baudelaire's spleen—that is, his profound disgust at things as they were—is only the most evident emotional sign of this state of affairs."[37]

However, unlike Baudelaire who falls prey, "amid the long and hushed procession of the dead," which "files slowly through his soul,"[38] Rouault's unrelenting desire for answers coupled with his willingness to accept the mystery that surrounds the meaning of existence ultimately sustain him though forced to endure "the grotesque menagerie and the descent towards Hell."[39] Rouault's paintings of prostitutes, clowns, world-weary sufferers call to mind this sense of "decrepitude," as if in Rouault's return to these haunted and haunting souls, the shock of heightened awareness expressed with such intensity and regret in Baudelaire's *Spleen et idéal* (Spleen and Ideal), there is the possibility of exploring the energy and redemption behind the masks.

Rouault's work then, as a cathartic expression of his own grief and suffering, transports him beyond the one-dimensional role of *flaneûr*. Neither casual observer nor self-interested judge, Rouault enters into the immediacy of the experience of a life overshadowed by misery and worn down to nothingness by the hungry and hostile bourgeoisie. In his imaginative and descriptive choices of titles for his artwork, Rouault binds together the gaze and the emotional state of subject and viewer. His fascination with Baudelaire extends beyond aesthetics and critical theory to encompass a shared experience of degradation and torment, enabling him to interpret and adapt Baudelaire's literary images in exquisite visual recreations of the defeated:

> Spiked heels, fake fingernails and frizzy curls,
> The damaged goods of our degraded time.[40]

Out of the shadows, Rouault crafts his prostitutes, resigned to their fate, their bodies and souls stripped naked before the mirror and before the world, and defines with harsh lines and stark contrast of color, the agony and betrayal expressed by Baudelaire in his poem "The Mask":

> Artistic blasphemy, sadistic shock!
> A goddess turned into a side-show freak!
> I see two heads on that exquisite neck!

—But one is just a mask, some kind of trick,
The graceful, radiant smile was a disguise,
So this must be the woman's real face, here,
Under the shadow of the one that lies—
Disfigured by an agonizing fear![41]

Rouault returns to Baudelaire's vision of spleen, of shock, of disgust in order to establish a profound level of intimacy, as he strips away illusion to reveal the brutal honesty of intense emotions. Rouault provides visible testimony as he transforms the moment of awareness, the violent eruption within the psyche from internalized flashes of disconnected memory, to a meaningful narrative. In such an intensive analysis, the artist dares to reveal his true nature to others and offer a challenge to gaze deeply upon his reflections of truth.

Douleur: Woundedness of the Modern Psyche

Rouault universalizes Baudelaire's experience of *douleur* (sadness, sorrow) and solidifies the woundedness of the modern psyche. The modern world of consumerism and hypocrisy has violently corrupted the human condition. The Grecian urn is contaminated as is its symbolic beauty, and in the language of Baudelaire and in the portraits of Rouault, the cost of modernity emerges in the discarded waste, the raw sewage of "the human body—the original microcosm—(as it) becomes an emblem not only of the world but also of its redemption."[42] Trauma and shock, existing only in memory and without form, take on physical attributes, revealing the interior pain and suffering (*la douleur*), the tainted sores, oozing from around the shadows and broken lines of so many portraits of wretched and rejected humanity.

Rouault, as Baudelaire before him, must confront the ambivalence caused by being a sensitive and empathic soul in an intoxicated world, desperate to escape or at least deny the harsh reality of existence. And as Rouault confronts the refuse of his own society, he forces our gaze to turn toward the degradation and exploitation of the less fortunate so as to break down the denial of isolation among the classes and re-establish the connection between the clown and the king, the prostitute and the poet, the dehumanization of the lived experience.

The images of the marginalized as described by Baudelaire or as depicted by Rouault are quite complex and often quite disconcerting, as their actions and their haunting gazes demand accountability and an acknowledgment of the hypocrisy that is enveloping Paris and by extension, all of suffering humanity. However, while Baudelaire descends ever more deeply into the brokenness and despair around him, overcome by corruption, evil and a sinful world, Rouault instead elevates personal suffering by incorporating the suffering image of Christ on the cross (**no. 27ii**), and more particularly, by repeating the image revealed in Veronica's veil.

In striking contrast to Baudelaire's vile presentation and acceptance of society as hypocrites, "lechers with nothing left"...reveling in the filth of a decaying world,[43] Rouault challenges the *debauché pauvre* (impoverished depraved) to rise above the perversity and hypocrisy by connecting all of suffering humanity to Christ. Such identification with the image of Christ transforms the meaninglessness of personal misery and extends empathy toward the marginalized, neglected, and exploited and reinstates dignity to all. Especially in his *Miserere*, Rouault dignifies the human condition and offers inspiration with his visual interpretation of the Kantian principle: always consider a human being as an end in itself, never as a *means* to an end.

With vivid strokes, Rouault repeatedly portrays images reflected upon by Edgar Allan Poe and then seized upon by Baudelaire: the disturbing paradox of the suffering of the lower classes at the expense of those with privilege. Disillusioned with the frenetic pace of a false world, Poe observes the servility and forced isolation of the clowns, whose manner of dress and movement mimics the economic conditions of the emerging modern times, seeming at times to numb himself, to surrender to the intoxication of the crowd.[44]

Rouault's empathic response is less dark, less despairing, for he sees past the wretchedness and reaches that deeper level of recognition, choosing to look for meaning in the painful sensations and

memories, rather than choosing to abandon himself in sense-less, soul-less and mind-less activity. Jolting the crowd out of complacency, shocking the deadened senses back to true life, Rouault transforms Baudelaire's threatening conception of synesthesia, from excessive brutality and victimization through the senses to a deeper understanding and processing at the complex core of the human condition.

In Benjamin's analysis, Baudelaire's sensitive nature, so keenly presented in *Spleen,* demonstrates his fascination with decay, death, and those things that have lost their value, "that empathy with inorganic things which was one of his sources of inspiration."[45] "Empathy is the nature of the intoxication to which the *flaneür* abandons himself in the crowd. 'The poet enjoys the incomparable privilege of being himself and someone else as he sees fit. Like a roving soul in search of a body, he enters another person whenever he wishes.'"[46]

Christ as Shock: A Suffering God

It is this same intensity of empathic feeling that Rouault expresses in his paintings of the old and broken-down clowns, kings and prostitutes, reasserting value and worth, transforming the victimized and exploited into sacrifices at last redeemed and understood. Rouault's artistry evolves out of a similar understanding of the vulnerability of the human condition as symbolized in the city and citizens of Paris. In his analysis of French Symbolism, Wallace Fowlie references Baudelaire's ambivalence toward Paris, which permeates all facets of his life, personal, professional and spiritual, with ever-greater complexity that culminates in his awareness of a suffering God. At the heart of the poet's struggle to survive, although much darker in tone, there are striking similarities to Rouault's vision of suffering: "...so Baudelaire's tendency to despair may be explained by his disgust for himself, by his feeling that a world was collapsing around him, by his experience of a suffering God. Evil, then, for Baudelaire, would be his consciousness of the world, his ever-present awareness of the physical forces around him that lead to change and destruction and annihilation."[47]

This notion of a suffering God, and by extension, a suffering humanity, fuels the passionate sensations of both Baudelaire and Rouault, though one finds solace by disconnecting/detaching from the desolation of the soul behind the mask, while the other chooses to probe deep within the wounds that fester beneath the deception. Baudelaire, victimized yet vitalized by the intoxication of Paris in the Second Empire (1852-1870) fully immerses himself in the squalor and decadence of the teeming crowd, so desperate to exploit or be exploited amid the promenade of wares, artistic and human, displayed along the boulevards. Baudelaire, in Benjamin's analysis, epitomizes the trauma of the Second Empire, with an insatiable bourgeoisie depleting the resources and psyche of the intoxicated masses.

Baudelaire and Rouault have much in common: the same city, the same disgust toward a society that places self-gratification above human dignity and that values the charade of living above life itself, deep sensitivity and empathy revealed in artistic passion. Both suffer misery and despair. Both recognize the disguises worn by a wounded world and both seek to look beyond the mask, to reveal the inner beauty, scarred by the pain of living. Rouault's recurring leit-motif: "Who wears no disguise?" as he painstakingly studies and tries to make sense of "the juxtaposition of shining, sparkling things made to amuse with the infinite sadness of life..., as poetry pours from (his) subconscious"[48] and his direct expression of man's capacity for evil in *Miserere*: "Homo Homini Lupus" ("Man is a Wolf to Man")[49] (**no. 27kk**) calls to mind Freud's cynical assessment of human nature, the constant struggle between Eros and Thanatos.[50] And yet, paradoxically, similar effects of modernity and the experience of shock that comes to define their lives and their artistic response destroy one and sustain the other.

Baudelaire walks the streets of Paris and is consumed by the degradation, losing his humanity, his very self "in our grotesque menagerie of vice."[51] Unlike Rouault, who deliberately reinforces the transcendent in his art work, in which even the

lost souls, spurned and violated by society, project a hint of the sacred from behind the mask, Baudelaire cannot see value in his human subjects or in himself, and as a result, all that is human devolves into mere object, inanimate, without connection. Though firmly grounded in similar subject matter, Baudelaire and Rouault interpret and express this concept of a *commodity-soul* quite differently. Baudelaire, at times isolated from the frenzied madness of a society lost to pleasure and greed, at times succumbing to the amnesia of the intoxicated crowd, is eventually overwhelmed by relentless memories. Ultimately, Baudelaire cannot separate himself from such intense experiences, *spleen*, the feelings of boredom and disgust that dissolve hope.

His poetry reveals the torment of the discarded victim, who rails against the disdain of a heartless bourgeoisie, blindly infatuated by progress, profit and machines. The dejected and hopeless tone, which the poet identifies with the discarded and empty "little souvenir,"[52] of "The Perfume Flask," calls to mind Benjamin's insistence on the impact of commoditization upon Paris and the parasitic relationships that defined the period. The images reinforce the insignificance of the individual. For Baudelaire, acceptance of the human condition does not transform each experience of suffering and lead to solidarity and transcendence, as with Rouault. Rather, Baudelaire's insistence of hiding behind a mask, serves only to deepen the fragmentation and isolation caused by his experience of shock, condemning him to re-live painful memories of physical and spiritual disconnection. Stripped of all compassion and empathy, Baudelaire employs harsh and degrading language to describe his damaged soul, and by extension, that of a suffering world:

> Likewise when I too shall be forgotten,
> Tossed into some dark corner, left to rot.
> A fiasco! Rejected, vile, 'used-up',
> Outdated, dirty, tacky, cracked and
> crazed![53]

And yet those same words could be applied to Rouault's subjects, including his depictions of Christ: broken, vilified, in tattered costumes and rags. Baudelaire struggles to define the world around him and his role as an artist, only to alienate himself from life itself, as if to escape by disappearing behind a mask in order "to conceal-out of shame-the supra-individual necessity of his way of life and, to a certain extent, his fate."[54] Purpose and meaning become entangled in the city of Paris, as the ultimate veiled portrayal of a suffering humanity, embodying in itself, perhaps, the "prostitution of the commodity's soul."[55] Violence toward and exploitation of the individual, as well as the decay and disintegration of the self pushes Baudelaire toward death, hopelessness, and a loss of identity that permeates the substance of Baudelaire's poetry. Trapped in his dark memories—"*J'ai plus de souvenirs que si j'avais mille ans*" (I have more memories than if I were a thousand years old)[56]—Baudelaire lives out the world of his own creation, lost amid synesthetic moments, ennui, intoxication and torment, his spirit caught between pleasure and a desire for death.

Though immersed in an equally fragmented and disguised world, Rouault chooses to confront the misery behind the mask and in so doing transforms his personal shock from fragmented traumatic memory to a narrative of universal suffering, compassion, and redemption. Rouault empathizes with a suffering humanity that has become nothing more than a means for others to abuse for their own purposes; and through his paintings of such wretched souls, he reveals the challenges of human existence.

As a result, his portraits, though disconcerting and at times recalling the poetic language and torment of Baudelaire, lead to transformation and transcendence. Whereas Baudelaire craves escape from excessive distress—"the malady of having lived!"[57]—and desires only that his own body and soul dissolve into the grave of oblivion, [58] Rouault integrates the individual experience of wretchedness and despair and condemns the hypocrisy of the bourgeois and the evil he witnesses in his selection of subjects for his artistic endeavors. As he portrays the plight of a suffering humanity, Rouault positions himself against the hypocrites and those who choose despair, to reveal a miraculous strength in the defiant gaze of his most wretched creatures.

In sum: by accepting the complicated reality of the human condition, Rouault offers a visual portrait of the "goddess turned into a side-show freak!"—the real face of the woman behind the mask, who endures life's agony and ambiguity and survives.

> —The malady, you fool of having lived!
> Of life itself! That's why she feels such pain,
> Why living seems so ignominious…
> Tomorrow she will have to live again!
> Tomorrow, and from there on out. Like us![59]

In his depiction of the *misérables*, Rouault intensifies the recurring and familiar theme of a suffering humanity, hidden behind masks, disguised to dismiss torment and pain, cruelly judged and victimized by an uncaring society. Representing *la misère*, Rouault transforms the traditional interpretation and appearance of those whose hearts and spirits have been broken and brutalized by the tragedy that is life, and as a result, dignifies their experience. Their *misère* is met with mercy: *Miserere.*

Endnotes

1 Baudelaire: "Au Lecteur," "Le Masque"; Benjamin, "Some Motifs in Baudelaire"; Rouault, Letter to Schuré.

2 See Walter Benjamin's analyses of Baudelaire and modernity (decadence in Paris), *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism* (New York: Verso Classics, 1999) 123.

3 Walter Benjamin, *The Writer of Modern Life: Essays on Charles Baudelaire,* ed. Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard Univ. Press, 2006) 135, 168.

4 See Schloesser and Howe essays in this volume.

5 i.e., = "form and foundation," *Imago Hominis: Studies in the Language of Art,* Moshe Barasch (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1994) 48-58. Barasch explores the evolution of meaning of the mask, from pagan to Christian motifs, from a vehicle of hiding the identity and masking the sinfulness and shame, to one of revealing the mystery and unveiling hidden truths.

6 *Rouault: Great Modern Masters,* ed. José María Faerna (New York: Cameo/Abrams, 1997) 25.

7 Stephen Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism: Mystic Modernism in Postwar Paris, 1919-1933* (Toronto: Toronto Univ. Press, 2005) 231, 232.

8 William Wordsworth, "The World is Too Much With Us," *English Romantic Writers,* ed. David Perkins (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1967) 289.

9 Walter Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire* 149.

10 William Shakespeare, *King Lear* (III .iv.ll.105, 36).

11 Bettina L. Knapp, *Word/Image/Psyche* (University, Alabama: Univ. of Alabama Press, 1985) 31.

12 Patricia Mathews, *Passionate Discontent: Creativity, Gender, and French Symbolist Art* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1999) esp. ch. 4, *The Gender of Creativity*, 64-85, in which she explores the fascination and disdain of an emerging modern society that saw woman as both the consumer and that which was willing to be consumed (within the psychological , sociological and economic conditions of the late 19th century). Also, Charles Bernheimer, *Figures of Ill Repute: Representing Prostitution in Nineteenth-Century France* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1989) 1-6. Bernheimer examines the etymology of the word, to set forth in public, aligning it with Baudelaire's definition of prostitution and its intrinsic relationship with art.

13 William Shakespeare, *King Lear,* notably Acts III and V, in which, the themes of inexplicable suffering and torment as well as the insistence upon disguising identity, true self and emotion.

14 Charles Baudelaire, *Complete Poems*, trans. Walter Martin (New York: Routledge, 2002). In particular, the opening poem "To the Reader" 3, Black Bile (Spleen) series, 193, 195, 197, 199, "The Mask" 57, "The Ideal" with a reference to "Madame MacBeth," 51, and "Jewels" 55.

15 Judith Lewis Herman, M.D., *Trauma and Recovery* (New York: Basic Books/Harper Collins Pub., 1992) 33-73.

16 Mathews 3.

17 Walter Benjamin, *The Writer of Modern Life* 160, and throughout the chapter entitled "Central Park." Benjamin discusses Baudelaire's entanglement with time and space (the struggle between antiquity and modernity, symbolized in Paris of the Second Empire).

18 Debarati Sanyal, *The Violence of Modernity: Baudelaire, Irony and the Politics of Form*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2006) 44.

19 Suzanne M. Singletary, "Jacob Wrestling with the Angel: A Theme in Symbolist Art," *Nineteenth-Century French Studies 32,* 302. nos. 3 & 4 (Spring-Summer 2004): 299-311.

20 John Keats, "Ode to a Nightingale," *English Romantic Writers*, ed. David Perkins (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1967) 1184.

21 Rouault's experience of living through the violence and disruption of three wars bears striking similarities to the theme of shock, developed by Benjamin in his analysis of Baudelaire, also based upon violence and traumatic experience.

22 Rouault's description as expressed in his letters and captions of his artwork, reflecting Baudelaire's similar reflection, as seen in his poem, "The Old Clown," from Spleen in Paris in Charles Baudelaire, *Flowers of Evil and Other Works*, ed. and trans. Wallace Fowlie (New York: Dover Publications, Inc, 1964) 133.

23 Sanyal 53-94. Throughout ch. 2, Sanyal discusses Baudelaire's dilemma of adapting to an increasingly violent society as well as entering into a broader analysis of the term "violent."

24 *Pleasures of Paris: Daumier to Picasso*, ed. Barbara Stern Shapiro (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts/David R. Godine, Pub., 1991) 40.

25 Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire* 39.

26 Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire* 61.

27 Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 239.

28 Charles Baudelaire, *Complete Poems*, "Spleen"/"Black Bile" 194.

29 See Baudelaire's prose-poem, *Les Foules* (The Crowd).

30 *Anna Akhmatova*: *Selected Poems*, trans. D.M. Thomas (New York: Penguin Books, 1985) 87. With striking similarity, in 1957, the Russian poet, Anna Akhmatova, writes in the prelude to her poem, "Requiem," "In the fearful years of the Yezhov terror I spent seventeen months in prison queues in Leningrad. One day somebody 'identified' me…she suddenly came out of that trance so common to us all and whispered in my ear: 'Can you describe this?' And I said: 'Yes, I can.'"

31 Robin Cormack, *Painting the Soul: Icons, Death Masks and Shrouds* (London: Reaktion Books, 1997) 129.

32 Cormack 31.

33 Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 239.

34 Fabrice Hergott and Sarah Whitfield, *Georges Rouault: The Early Years, 1903-1920* (London: Royal Acedemy of Arts/Lund Humphries Pub., 1993) 32.

35 Wallace Fowlie, *Poem & Symbol: A Brief History of French Symbolism* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1990) 28.

36 Fowlie 30.

37 Walter Benjamin, *The Writer of Modern Life* 17.

38 Baudelaire, "Black Bile" 199.

39 Baudelaire, "To the Reader" 3.

40 Baudelaire, "The Ideal" 51.

41 Baudelaire, "The Mask" 57.

42 Barasch 14.

43 Baudelaire, as expressed in his introductory poem "To The Reader" 3.

44 Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire* 53.

45 Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire* 55.

46 Benjamin, *Charles Badelaire* 55.

47 Fowlie 46.

48 Hergott and Whitfield 27.

49 George Rouault, *Miserere* plate 37.

50 Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 1961). Throughout the text, Freud discusses his theory of the on-going tension of the human psyche between Eros and Thanatos, the pleasure principle and the death instinct.

51 Baudelaire, "To The Reader" 3.

52 Baudelaire, "The Perfume-Flask" 127.

53 Baudelaire, "The Perfume-Flask" 127.

54 Benjamin, *The Writer of Modern Life* 168.

55 Benjamin 86. Benjamin interprets the motif of prostitution as allegory for the ambivalent reactions to the evolving modernity of Paris, with its gaslights, increased productivity and consumerism.

56 Baudelaire, "Black Bile" 195.

57 Baudelaire, "The Mask" 57.

58 Baudelaire, Most apparent in Baudelaire's four "Spleen"/"Black Bile" poems.

59 Baudelaire, "The Mask" 57.

Rouault's Dying Slave: Being Human as an Unfinished Work

Naomi Blumberg

> The bad side of my character is that I am never content with myself. I do not fully enjoy my successes, and I have always progress to make, in the eye and in the mind.
>
> —Georges Rouault (1913)[1]

The title of a lesser-known lithograph by Georges Rouault, *Être Dempsey* ou *L'Acrobate* (*To be Dempsey* or *The Acrobat*), invokes the boxer Jack Dempsey (**no. 25**). Dempsey held the world heavyweight title from 1919-1926; the lithograph was very likely produced in 1926, the year he lost the title.[2] Typically, Rouault's acrobats (of which there are many) are anonymous figures in contorted postures, representatives of the circus folk who performed and traveled through his impoverished childhood neighborhood of Belleville. Rouault assigned this acrobat a unique identity, however, one acquired from contemporary popular culture. "To Be Dempsey" implies questions: "What is being Dempsey?" "What is it like to be Dempsey?" "How does one become Dempsey?" Or it could be a more universal meditation on what it is *to be* human, the boxer/wrestler/acrobat signifying life's true protagonist for Rouault. The three pieces in *Saltimbanques* whose titles are based on action verbs—*Juggler*, *Wrestler*, *Tamer*—point to Rouault's vision of the human being as an *Acrobat*: one who must juggle, wrestle with, and eventually tame the constant challenges life brings.

Rouault had already made the association between the acrobat and the wrestler in a series of fifteen acrobats produced in 1912-1913. (*Acrobats XIII* from this series is in the present exhibition: **no. 18**). Of these fifteen, nine bear the double title "*Acrobate*, dit aussi: *Lutteur*" (*Acrobat*, also called: *Wrestler*)."[3] (The verb *lutter* means both "to wrestle" and "to struggle."[4]) These acrobats' arms are raised and contorted in such a way that the figures appear to be wrestling with themselves. Possibly a visualization of Rouault's personal goal, the artist believed that it was essential for a person to be in a state of constant progress, always changing. Although he saw this as a positive objective, Rouault also recognized it as a lifelong struggle, a *lutte*: through suffering will come salvation. His early mentor, Léon Bloy, held that suffering was "not merely a *privileged* path to redemption, but in fact the *exclusive* mode of participation in the supernatural."[5]

This archetypal physical posture—one arm overhead a contorted body—appears repeatedly in Rouault's depictions of protagonists, not only in the form of acrobats, but also in prostitutes, the destitute, and, in at least one instance, *Christ Mocked*. The acrobat-wrestler embodies the human condition, constantly

progressing and evolving through struggle and suffering. Dempsey, perhaps, lived out a particularly alluring lifestyle for Rouault, one in which he was literally fighting to make his way. It is significant, however, that Rouault seems to have produced *Être Dempsey*, not at the height of his fame, but at the moment (or after) he had lost the world title in 1926. He is a tragic archetype, not of lasting success, but of ongoing struggle.

Rouault's sources for this figure stemmed from the past. This might seem strange given Dempsey's popular cultural location and given that Rouault's break with the past after Gustave Moreau's death seems to have been so definitive—for example, in his rejection of salon-style paintings and his embrace of traveling circus figures. For exactly this reason, a genealogy of the posture, its sources and its possible meanings within Rouault's oeuvre demonstrates that Rouault maintained continuity with the past even as he broke with it.

Rouault had studied at the École des Beaux-Arts under Moreau, who established his students' reference points firmly within the past.[6] His ideal was grand works of historical and mythological subjects, and Moreau encouraged his students to copy the Old Masters but not to mimic what they saw. Despite his preference for epic (and what might be considered Academic) subject matter, Moreau was adamantly anti-naturalist and anti-realist. He celebrated instead the personal interpretation of nature and the imaginative and explosive use of color—a gift Rouault either acquired or innately possessed.[7] Adopting some of Moreau's subversive approaches in early works such as *Jesus among the Doctors* (1894) or *Pietà* (1895), Rouault set out on the path to achieving his intended effect of representing modernity and timelessness simultaneously.[8] This was not only Moreau's hope for his pupils, but also the theory of modern beauty set out by Charles Baudelaire: "Modernity is the transient, the fleeting, the contingent; it is one half of art, the other being the eternal and the immovable."[9] Although these early works did not win the prizes that both Moreau and Rouault had hoped for, critics were impressed by both the daring use of the Flemish Primitives and the idiosyncratic approach to color.[10]

After Moreau's death in 1898, Rouault departed radically from Moreau's dictates on historical and epic subject matter, turning instead to portrayals of contemporary Parisian society. However, even as he rejected the past for a new cast of characters—acrobats, prostitutes, nudes, and even Christ—Rouault still cast those new characters in archetypal forms descended from the past. The genealogy of the *Être Dempsey* posture demonstrates both a break with the past even as it is deeply rooted in the past.

I. Michelangelo: *The Dying Slave* (1513–15)

The French Academic tradition had eschewed Michelangelo, viewing him to be an insufficient model for the art student. Uncomfortable with the expressive tension Michelangelo achieved in his work, some Academic theorists even saw demonic undertones in the contorted bodies and passionate expressions.[11] However, 1875 marked the four-hundredth anniversary of Michelangelo's birth, and the artist was celebrated as a "national" icon in the recently invented Kingdom of Italy—especially in Florence, which had served as the nation's capital (from 1865-70) before the victory over (and dissolution of) the Papal States in 1870.[12] It is likely that these ongoing celebrations served as the catalyst for a revived international interest in Michelangelo's work.

Many late-nineteenth-century artists, searching for subjectivity in their work, turned to Michelangelo for the same reasons the Academy had dismissed him. They saw Michelangelo as a master, an Academic artist who could tease out emotion and sensitivity from a work Herculean in size and presence, or from a work that appeared unfinished to the Academic eye. The *Dying Slave* (**fig. 2**) along with its partner at the Louvre, *The Rebellious Slave* (1513-16), served as a model for countless artists, including Eugène Delacroix, Edgar Degas, Paul Cezanne, Odilon Redon, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, and, most especially, Auguste Rodin. The dying slave stands contorted, unaware of his surroundings, perhaps semi-conscious and captivated by something internal. His feet are sunk into the base of the sculpture, which holds him firmly in place

Fig 1. Auguste Rodin. *The Age of Bronze*, ca. 1876, 71 in. high. ©V&A Images/Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Fig 2. Michelangelo. *The Dying Slave*, 1513-15, marble, 90 in. high, Musée du Louvre, inv. M. R. 1590. Photo: Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY

while bands wrapped around his chest and over his right shoulder bind him to something insurmountable. The slave is frozen in time, struggling to free himself from the marble and emerge fully into the three-dimensional world.

Rouault, like his École counterparts, studied the Old Masters first hand at the Louvre, where he would have sketched Michelangelo's work. He saw the Renaissance master through an expressionist lens: "Michelangelo is the somber ancestor of the lonely moderns. For [the moderns] our beloved art has become a haven of rest where they can flourish, even in the face of the fearful trials assailing them from all sides, from birth until death."[13]

II. Auguste Rodin: *The Age of Bronze* (1877)

Rodin was the nineteenth-century gateway to Michelangelo. Art historians and critics have identified him as the "obligatory lens that brings Michelangelo's titanism into modern focus."[14] In 1876, Rodin began a large-scale nude sculpture, working in the Academic tradition despite the fact he had been rejected by the École des Beaux-Arts. Perhaps because he recognized the vast array of Italian sculpture and painting he had not yet had the privilege of viewing first hand, he paused mid-project and took a voyage to Italy. He spent most of his time in Florence during this year following the four-hundredth anniversary celebrations of Michelangelo's birth.[15] He likely visited the Pitti Palace where he would have viewed Michelangelo's series of four slaves, *Atlas*, *Awakening Slave*, *Young Slave*, and *Bearded Slave*.[16]

In 1877, Rodin returned to Paris and completed *The Age of Bronze* (**fig. 1**), his masterful nude sculpture that clearly echoes the contortion and tension of the Michelangelo slaves. With his right arm bent at the elbow, raised overhead and resting on the crown of his head; and with his left arm bent at the elbow ending in a clenched fist; the young male figure appears anguished. (Rodin sought an unprofessional model, Auguste Neyt, a young soldier, to achieve the greatest degree of naturalism.) The work originally had at least a minimal amount of context: before Rodin traveled to Italy, the figure was leaning on a spear held in the left hand (suggesting that he might be a warrior) and was tentatively titled *The Conquered Man* (or *The Vanquished*). After his return to Paris from Italy, Rodin eliminated the spear and eventually renamed the work, leaving the statue mysteriously expressive.[17]

Rodin became the most celebrated living sculptor of his time and illustrated articles and reviews of his work circulated widely, making him easily available to an international audience. In 1901, an entire gallery of the Venice Biennale was dedicated to his work. Rouault, in particular, may have been drawn to Rodin's ability to complete a work of art that stands as merely a fragment of a whole, a truly modern conception of the finished work. For an artist to determine a work finished based on his own instinct and unique vision went against the Academic conception of "finished." This rejection of the parameters defined by the Academy was the mark of a revolutionary, and this embrace of individualism must have indeed appealed to Rouault.

Rouault wrote specifically in homage to Rodin in 1910, comparing him to the mythological half-animal half-human Pan: "His soul is great and melancholic, he is an enslaved (*enchaîné*) demi-god." (Again the return of struggle, enslavement, enchainment—*enchaîné*—literally, to be in chains.[18]) Rouault finds in Rodin the ability to fuse the past and the present: "a form so pure and so perfect, communes in this moment with me beyond the centuries."[19] Two years after this publication, Rouault produced his series of fifteen acrobat-wrestlers (1912-1913) including *Acrobates XIII* (**no. 18**).

II. Edvard Munch: *Flower of Pain* (1898)

Edvard Munch's *Flower of Pain* (**fig. 3**) was featured on the cover of an 1899 issue of the Berlin art journal *Quickborn*.[20] Munch produced the work just after returning to Norway from Paris where he had lived from 1896-98. (Munch had been to Paris before: initially in 1885 to experience international modern art movements, then again in 1889-90 during which time he briefly studied with Léon Bonnat at the École des Beaux-Arts.[21]) During this Parisian sojourn (overlapping Rouault's last two years in Moreau's atelier), Munch had shown his work at the new gallery L'Art Nouveau.[22] Munch had also exhibited at the Salon des Indépendants in both 1896 and 1897 (where Rouault would most certainly have seen his work) and received favorable

Fig 3. Edvard Munch, *Flower of Pain*, 1898, woodblock, 18 x 12 7/8 in. Harvard University Art Museums, Fogg Art Museum, Gift of Lynn and Philip A. Straus, class of 1937, M21544 Photo: Imaging Department © President and Fellows of Harvard College

reviews. Simplifying his style, Munch produced color lithographs and his first woodcuts at the print shop of Auguste Clot. These works—including two portraits of Stéphane Mallarmé (for which Mallarmé wrote Munch a thank-you note)—helped him make new connections with the Symbolists. While in Paris, Munch also produced illustrations for a new edition of Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du mal*.[23]

Although Rouault's writings make no explicit reference to Munch, it would be unlikely, given their mutual immersions in the Symbolist scene, that Rouault had no contact with Munch. In an uncanny turn of events, Munch's production of the *Flower of Pain* (1898) just after leaving Paris coincided with Moreau's death in April that same year—and Rouault's consequent nervous collapse.

As Jeffery Howe points out, Munch excelled at depicting the image of self-sacrifice, of beauty coming from pain.[24] Like Rouault, Munch looked to Christ as the embodiment of this notion and used his likeness to represent the ultimate

Fig 4. Paul Cézanne, *Standing Male Bather*, 1885-1900, graphite pencil on wove paper, 8 ½ x 5 in. Philadelphia Museum of Art; Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Walter H. Annenberg, 1987 (1987-53-78a).

marginalized, suffering outcast. In Munch's case, this took the form of Christ-like self-portraits. For Rouault, images of Christ in different states appear throughout his career. The one that most closely resembles Munch's *Flower of Pain* is *Christ Mocked* (1926; **no. 26n**), created for Rouault's own projected illustrated volume of Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du mal*. (Perhaps not surprisingly, it would seem that both graphic works, *Christ Mocked* and *Être Dempsey*, were executed in 1926.) In this depiction, Christ stands in the foreground, seen from the waist up, and his arms are raised over his head. He is exposed and vulnerable as he is chided and debased by a soldier looking up at him from the lower left corner. Though Christ's facial expression does not reveal much, we must read Rouault's choice of pose to understand his subject's emotional state at this moment. As Margaret Miles astutely suggests, in Rouault's figures, "what is real in the psyche is evident in the body."[25]

III. Paul Cezanne: *Large Bathers* (1907)

Like Rodin, Cezanne began copying *The Dying Slave* as early as 1870 and returned to it often throughout his career. He may have gravitated to Michelangelo because of his ability to create unfinished "finished" works, a prominent characteristic of Cezanne's own work. Rouault, in turn, may have gravitated to Cezanne especially for this quality, as well. The ground upon which Cezanne painted played a critical role in his compositions. Unpainted areas of canvas, especially in his late years, stood as positive components to the structure of the canvas. What appeared unfinished to the viewer and the critic was in fact an aesthetic choice. This is not to say that Cezanne did not have hundreds of unfinished works of art that he too considered unfinished, but he did not discount them. They were a part of the whole, a part of his process to realize his vision of nature.[26] This unfinished effect is evident in Rouault's work as well.

Because of Cezanne's extreme discomfort with working from live models and his inability to fully "realize" his sensations, he regularly worked from plasters and sculptures, as well as from memory. Like Rodin, Cezanne started out working in the academic tradition but departed from it over time. Cezanne's drawings of the *Dying Slave*, aside from a very early example from around 1870, were hardly mimetic of Michelangelo's sculpture. Cezanne's copies were deformed, ambiguously gendered, and grotesque in some cases (**fig. 4**). He used no solid, continuous lines to delineate the body; instead he drew series of crude lines overlapping one another to create volume and contour. Cezanne most often used the *Dying Slave* posture for a figure in his bather compositions—the "bather with arms raised overhead."

In 1896 (the same year that Munch arrived in Paris), Rouault visited the studio of Ambroise Vollard, one of the most influential and successful art dealers at the turn-of-the-century. He exhibited work by Cezanne, as well as by Degas, Renoir,

Redon, Gauguin, and Picasso, among others.[27] Cezanne's work was also featured prominently in the second Salon d'Automne, co-founded by Rouault in 1903, with more than thirty paintings displayed. After Cezanne died in October 1906, his *Large Bathers* (1899-1906) was posthumously exhibited the following autumn at the 1907 Salon. Bernard Dorival describes Rouault's utter admiration for and fascination with Cezanne:

> The man to whom Rouault looked up during this period, idolized almost, was Cezanne. He had seen three of his paintings at the Universal exhibition of 1900, some others at the Salon des Indépendants in 1901 and 1902, a further thirty-three to which an entire room had been given over at the 1903 Salon d'Automne, as well as the ten paintings exhibited in the same Salon three years later. There was probably no more assiduous visitor to the posthumous retrospective of Cezanne's work in 1907.[28]

Rouault's 1908 *Whore (Woman with Red/brown-Colored Hair,* **no. 10**) is rendered with her hands clasped overhead, appearing more like Cezanne's bather than Michelangelo's slave; still, the awkward contortion can be traced back to the *Dying Slave*'s contrapposto. With the major retrospective of Cezanne's work that year at the Salon d'Automne, Rouault was likely inundated by Cezanne's imagery.[29] She resembles Cezanne's bather not only in her contortion, but also in the short, concave lines that build up to create contour, a signature of Cezanne's method. Her face is distorted, grotesque, ungendered. Rouault is also clearly influenced by Cezanne's palette here, with blues and greens filling the canvas. The canvas itself bears that unfinished appearance Rouault so admired in Cezanne's work.

The twist of her body does not necessarily connote anguish, though it may indicate some kind of struggle or discomfort, as do Rouault's acrobats who share the twisted yet flexible body used for entertaining others. Mary Louise Roberts describes her body as old and used, "worn before [its] time."[30] On the one hand, this posture allows Rouault to show these physical qualities; on the other hand, the posture's significance also shows interior qualities. Guileless, stripped bare, and thoroughly human, she too may be striving for something more.

Rouault seemed to understand what Cezanne was trying to accomplish on canvas. In his *Souvenirs intimes* (1926), a collection of short essays reminiscing about the most important influences in his life, Rouault empathized with Cezanne and defended him against the critics, encouraging him (perhaps in a self-reference?) to continue working in his paradoxically modern yet ancient ways. "Is it better to err in our own manner than in the manner of the masters? All the more reason not to play the same game with respect to our modernists as soon as success distinguishes them."[31] A decade later, Rouault returned to Cezanne's bathers in *Autumn* (ca. 1938, **no. 57**). Produced in the autumn of Rouault's own life (at age sixty-seven), the composition seems to be an intentional return to the *Autumn* he had produced in 1906, the year Cezanne died. Rouault's 1938 work explicitly recalls his own 1906 replications of Cezanne's bathers pose, a move perhaps intended to provide closure in the face of an uncertain future.[32]

V. Rouault: *To Be Dempsey* (ca. 1926)

Rouault's numerous anonymous circus performers lead us to the rare instance of one named after a known person: Jack Dempsey, world heavyweight champion from 1919-1926. If the approximate dating of this work is correct, Rouault chose to honor Dempsey at the very moment that he experienced a reversal of fortune and lost his title. This strange set of circumstances invites the viewer to ask: "What does it mean 'to be Dempsey'?"

It is not surprising that Rouault might have been enamored of Dempsey's story. Like Rouault, Dempsey overcame hardships throughout his life, beginning with his poverty-stricken childhood. Since his father had trouble finding work, the family (which included eleven children) was often on the move, forcing Dempsey to drop out of school and begin working at a young age to help support his family. In adolescence, Dempsey eventually left

home and traveled on freight trains around the American West. (His nomadic existence echoed one of Rouault's favorite themes—those who live on the road, like Jacques Callot's beggars and bohemians, Honoré Daumier's Saltimbanques on the move, and Édouard Manet's gypsies.[33])

Dempsey originally learned to fight as a means to survive.[34] Knowing he had a gift, he sometimes went to bars in search of a fight in order to make some money. A fortuitous meeting with a boxing manager led to the start of his career. Unlike the well-known lithograph by George Bellows (George Bellows, *Dempsey and Firpo* [1923-24][35]), Rouault's depiction does not show Dempsey (or the Acrobat) actively fighting. However, he is built like a boxer, muscular and lean, and he has the appearance of having been chiseled out of stone—perhaps a veiled reference to Rouault's source in Michelangelo. Dempsey's internal moment of solitude, vulnerability, and pain—perhaps the pain of defeat—is manifest on his body, his non-public persona laid bare for all to see. Like Munch's *Flower of Pain*, Dempsey may be experiencing a moment of existential anxiety.

For Rouault this inversion of fortunes would not be a moment of despair but, instead, a moment of revelation, of being returned to reality. He would not have considered Dempsey's worldly triumph a moment of glory but a moment of danger. "I have the failing," wrote Rouault, "...never to leave anyone in their sequined costume, even if he is king or emperor. What I want to see in the man standing before me is his soul, and the greater the person, the more exalted his position, the more I fear for his soul."[36]

Rouault's depiction of Dempsey in the year he lost the title seems to be linked to the condition of Christ. In the *Christ Mocked* (1926) Rouault created at this same time for Baudelaire's *Fleurs du mal*, Christ resembles Dempsey. Seemingly carved out of stone, bound by the picture's frames closing in on him, Christ stands with his arms raised overhead, at the mercy of his challengers who misjudge him. More universally, the fighter also returns to the human condition: an ongoing struggle in which suffering leads to redemption.

VI. Rouault: *Are We Not Slaves?* (1920–1929)

Ne sommes-nous pas forçats? (*Are we not Slaves?*) (1920-29; **no. 32**), a study for the *Miserere* created sometime during this same period, is Rouault's most definitive use of the pose. The nude *forçat* (slave) stands in the foreground with arms overhead. Although muscular, his body is distorted and top-heavy, and the eerie illumination turns the composition's tones blue and corpse-like. While all other elements in the composition seem to be pulling his body (and the viewer's eyes) downward, his arms thrust upward and his hands claw at his head. His anguish and struggle are fully exposed: unmasked, unclothed, unidentified, uncontextualized, unprotected from judgment. He embodies Michelangelo's *Dying Slave*, bound by some unknown force. The word *forçat*—a (galley) slave, a drudge, a forced laborer—suggests that every human being is a slave in some capacity.

Although a study for the *Miserere*, this image is not the one that Rouault eventually chose to use. Instead he chose *Ne sommes-nous pas forçats?...* (1926, **no. 27e**) whose ellipsis links it to *nous croyant rois* (1923, **no. 27f**). The two plates are meant to function as a diptych: we are slaves who fantasize that we are kings—like the deluded King Ubu *enchaîné*. Rouault's associations around the year 1926 are complex yet clear: *Être Dempsey* or *Acrobat*; *Christ Mocked*; *Are we not Slaves?* Those the world esteems on the basis of appearances are not always those who are to be esteemed. Human beings are not the masters of our fates: worldly titles, whether those of kingship or heavyweight championships, come and go with inversions of fortune. We are not meant to stay in one place; we are meant to live on the road. We are works-in-progress.

Rouault's high regard for the work-in-progress is revealed in his choices of artists to emulate, especially Michelangelo, Rodin, and Cezanne. Each had his personal brand of the "unfinished finished" work of art and each was recognized (and often criticized) for it. Rouault's life's work was to free himself and his subjects through his art, which

may be why he labored so rigorously over his canvases, compulsively returning to the same subject matter over and over. He admired the struggle and thought highly of the unfinished work, whether it be a work of art or a human being. There is stagnancy in being "finished" and he worked to achieve the appearance of unfinished compositions. Were his works to appear "finished" might suggest that, as an artist, he had nothing left to accomplish. His array of models and sources all speak to his need to be constantly working, constantly changing, never fully at rest. Although he may have been a slave to his art, paradoxically, this enchainment might have freed him to live with a sense of fulfillment.

I thank Stephen Schloesser for his contributions to this essay.

Endnotes

1 Letter of Georges Rouault to André Suarès (1913), *Correspondance de Georges Rouault et André Suarès* (Paris: Gallimard, 1960) 81-82; qtd. in Dyrness, 80.

2 Although undated, *Être Dempsey or l'Acrobate* comes from the series *Saltimbanques*, located in the catalogue raisonné between *Maîtres et petits Maîtres d'Aujourd'hui* (1926) and Georges Charensol's *Rouault* (Paris: Éditions des Quatre Chemins, 1926). It would seem that Isabelle Rouault judged its composition to have been most likely during this prolific year of engraving (which also included Rouault's *Souvenirs intimes* (Paris: E. Frapier, 1926). See François Chapon and Isabelle Rouault, *Rouault: Œuvre gravé*, 2 vols. (Monte-Carlo: Éditions André Sauret, 1978) 2: 280-299. *Être Dempsey* is no. 332.

3 Bernard Dorival and Isabelle Rouault, *Rouault: l'Œuvre peint*, 2 vols. (Monte-Carlo: Éditions André Sauret, 1988) 1:152-56. See also three early works (1905-06) entitled *Lutteur* (Wrestler) 1:43. For further discussion of Moreau and Rouault, see Jeffery Howe essay in the present volume.

4 See Stephen Schloesser's essay in the present volume.

5 Stephen Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism: Mystic Modernism in Postwar Paris, 1919-1933* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 2005) 67.

6 Dorival and Rouault, *l'Œuvre peint* 1:14. In addition to Old Masters like Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528), Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-1669) and Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665), Rouault also studied 19th-century figures like Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot (1796-1875).

7 Cristina Scassellati Cooke, "The Ideal of History Painting: Georges Rouault and other Students of Gustave Moreau at the École des Beaux-Arts, Paris, 1892-98," *Burlington Magazine* 148/1238 (May 2006): 332-39, see p. 336.

8 Cooke 335.

9 Charles Baudelaire, "The Painter of Modern Life," *The Painter of Modern Life, and other essays*, trans. and ed. Jonathan Mayne (London: Phaidon, 1964).

10 Cooke 338.

11 Christopher Riopelle, "Rodin Confronts Michelangelo," *Rodin and Michelangelo: A Study on Artistic Inspiration*, Flavio Fergonzi et al. (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1996) 38.

12 Riopelle, "Rodin Confronts Michelangelo" 39.

13 Rouault, *Soliloques* 74.

14 Maria Mimita Lamberti, "Rodin and Michelangelo: A Turning Point in Modern Sculpture," *Rodin and Michelangelo*, 76.

15 Flavio Fergonzi, "The Discovery of Michelangelo: Some Thoughts on Rodin's Week in Florence and its Consequences," *Rodin and Michelangelo*, 51.

16 Since 1908 these have been housed at the Accademia delle Belle Arti in Florence. For more on Rodin's experience in Italy see Fergonzi 51-68.

17 Riopelle, "The Age of Bronze," *Rodin and Michelangelo* 88.

18 In referring to an "enchained demi-god," Rouault is most likely playing on the title of Alfred Jarry's play *Ubu enchainé* which embodies the notion of the union of opposites: a king (Ubu) who is enslaved. Jarry, *Ubu enchainé, précédé de Ubu roi* (Paris: Éditions de la Revue Blanche, 1900). For the union of opposites see Schloesser essay in the present volume.

19 Georges Rouault, "Notes sur le *Noli me tangere* de Cèzanne, *La Toison d'*or de Carrière et *Le Grand Pan* de Rodin," *Mercure de France* (16 November 1910): 654-59; partially reprinted in *Georges Rouault, forme, couleur, harmonie,* catalogue published for the Musée d'art moderne et contemporain de Strasbourg exhibition, 10 November 2006 to 18 March 2007, commissariat Fabrice Hergott (Strasbourg: Musées de Strasbourg, 2006) 23. I thank Claude Cernuschi for his translation.

20 Jeffery Howe, "Nocturnes: The Music of Melancholy, and the Mysteries of Love and Death," *Edvard Munch: Psyche, Symbol, and Expression*, ed. Jeffery Howe (Chestnut Hill, MA: McMullen Museum of Art, 2000) 48-74, see p. 58. For more on Rouault's connections to the Expressionist movement, see Claude Cernuschi's essay in this volume.

21 Jeffery Howe, "Introduction: Munch in Context," *Edvard Munch*, 11-19, see p. 15.

22 Howe, "Introduction" 18.

23 Stephen Schloesser, "From Spiritual Naturalism to Psychical Naturalism: Catholic Decadence, Lutheran Munch, *Madone Mystérique*," *Edvard Munch*, 94.

24 Howe, "Nocturnes" 58.

25 See Margaret Miles essay in the present volume.

26 For an in depth discussion of Cezanne's creative process, see the exhibition catalogue *Cezanne: Finished/Unfinished*, eds. Felix Baumann, Evelyn Benesch, Walter Feilchenfeldt, and Klaus Albrecht-Schröder (Kunstforum Wien and Kunsthaus Zurich: Hatje Cantz Publishers and Authors, 2000).

27 Fabrice Hergott, *Rouault* (Barcelona: Ediciones Poligrafa, S.A., 1991) 21.

28 Dorival and Rouault, *l'Œuvre peint* 1:20.

29 Dorival suggests that Rouault's images of nudes shifting dramatically in 1907 to reflect his interest in Cezanne, 1:118. For images see Dorival and Rouault, *l'Œuvre peint* 1:93-102.

30 See Mary Louise Roberts' essay in the present volume for more on Rouault's prostitutes.

31 Georges Rouault, *Souvenirs intimes* (Paris: Galerie des Peintres Graveurs, E. Frapier, 1926) 70. I thank Claude Cernuschi for his translation.

32 For Rouault's *Baigneuses* (Bathers) created between 1906-08 see the catalogue raisonné plate nos. 339, 340, 341, 353, 356, 357; and *Automne* (Autumn [1906]), plate 360; in Dorival and Rouault, *l'Œuvre peint* 1:99-102.

33 For Rouault's interest in figures on the road, see essays by Roberto Goizueta, James Keenan, John Michalczyk, Gael Mooney, and Stephen Schloesser in the present volume.

34 http://www.ibhof.com/dempsey.htm. Accessed 2 May 2008

35 "*Dempsey and Firpo* was the result of an assignment Bellows received from the *Saturday Evening Post* to cover a prizefight between the champion Jack Dempsey and the Argentinean contender Luis Firpo. The artist chose to depict the moment when Dempsey was knocked out of the ring. Many believe the crowd pushed Dempsey back in, making his subsequent victory controversial. The lithograph captures the fall and the stunned expressions of the audience." Deborah Wye, *Artists and Prints: Masterworks from The Museum of Modern Art* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2004) 116.

36 Letter from Georges Rouault to Edouard Schuré (1905), qtd. and trans. by Mary Louise Roberts in the present volume.

Rouault and Expressionism

Claude Cernuschi

> He was very fond of his position as a 'marked' man or, as it were, an 'exile.' There is a sort of classical splendor about those two words that fascinated him and, raising him gradually in his own estimation in the course of years, finally led him to imagine himself as standing on a high pedestal, a position that was very gratifying to his vanity.
>
> Dostoyevsky, The Devils

While investigating the work of the French painter Georges Rouault, art historians and critics often broach, but remain unsure how to answer, a number of key questions. How should the artist be categorized? To which movement is he most closely connected? And to whom can he be legitimately compared? That such issues are raised is not surprising. Since Giorgio Vasari's distinction between the Tuscan and Venetian schools, Heinrich Wölfflin's between the Renaissance and the Baroque, and Alois Riegl's between the optic and the haptic, stylistic classification has proven an indispensable hallmark of both art history and art criticism. During the last century, as formal innovation became especially prized, and the term "derivative" a marker to be shunned above all else, the stakes underlying such demarcations grew progressively higher. Though frequently touted as neutral and disinterested, stylistic labels are frequently used to distinguish, not simply one artist from another, but "major" from "minor" figures, "innovators" from "disciples," the "genuine" from the "imitation." Hardly insensitive to such pressures, modern artists faced a perplexing dilemma: accepting the mandate to be original might enhance their position in history, but originality often meets, if only temporarily, with indifference, disapproval, or, worse, hostility. Anxious to showcase the novelty of their innovations, yet hoping to mitigate the potential censure of an uncomprehending public, modernists sought the camaraderie and mutual support of like-minded colleagues. Accordingly, in the early twentieth century, individual achievement is frequently conflated with, if not obscured under, a plethora of collective groups identifying themselves as "avant-garde": Fauvism, Cubism, Futurism, Vorticism, Rayonism, Suprematism, Constructivism, Neo-Plasticism, Expressionism, Dadaism, Surrealism, etc. Ironically, the careers of artists who steered clear of such movements sometimes fared worse than those whose production fell comfortably within the compass of a circumscribed unit, at least insofar as the later verdict of history was concerned. Predictably perhaps, critics and historians found the complexity of an artist's

production easier to grasp if its agenda were clearly outlined in group statements or *manifesti*.

This is not to say that the relationships among the individuals within these collective units were necessarily harmonious. As the security of belonging to a select community tempered the bite of public derision, professional rivalries and personal animosities were given freer expression. But despite being often fraught with tension, these artistic alliances provided useful frameworks for critics bent on constructing clear and logical trajectories for the evolution of modern art (one thinks, say, of the intricate genealogical patterns, the ways and by-ways of stylistic influence, identified by Alfred Barr, the first director of MoMA, in the introduction of his seminal book *Cubism and Abstract Art*). In the later twentieth century, as labels such as pre-modern, modern, and post-modern became exceedingly fashionable, a radical opposition to the established order, or to a timid and narrow-minded bourgeoisie, proved insufficient by themselves to guarantee an artist's place in history; in such a competitive cultural climate, the stakes motivating individual positioning, and connection with the "right" group or tendency, became higher still. As the German philosopher Martin Heidegger put it: "The word ['critique'] comes from the Greek κριυειν, which means 'to separate,' that is, to set something off from something—in most cases something lower from something higher."[1]

In Rouault's case, if his apologists remain noncommittal about the question of categorization, it is to resist linking the artist to any group or movement. According to Nadine Lehni, it is difficult to place his works "in relation to that of his contemporaries."[2] For Éric Darragon, he was neither modern nor post-modern, nor traditional; all these categories "fall flat on their face."[3] "Refusing to belong to any school, irritated by those art historians who assigned him a place in some movement or other," Bernard Dorival contends, Rouault "was a man of fierce independence."[4] The artist was not above making the same point himself, tirelessly lambasting critics who always long "to tie you to a particular movement."[5] "I am not of my time," he declared, "and that is not my fault. Others are proud to think themselves 'modernists.' Are they now? It is easy to stick *a label on merchandise, too easy*, in truth."[6]

Rouault's pronouncements are not without force. To be sure, a connection with French Fauvism is most plausible: he exhibited at the Salon d'Automne in 1905, that notorious exhibition that christened the group; and he and Matisse, fellow students of Gustave Moreau, held each other's work in high esteem. The basic ethos of Fauvism, however, if Matisse's famous pronouncement is any indication—that art should be "devoid of troubling or depressing subject matter," "like a good armchair" for "every mental worker"[7]—seems incompatible with Rouault's darker, more tragic vision. Rouault, as Pierre Courthion put it, "was never a real Fauve."[8] And it is indeed difficult to conjure circumstances under which any of his canvases could inspire titles such as *Le luxe, Le Bonheur de vivre*, or *Luxe, calme, et volupté*. In fact, he even considered these very sentiments inimical to his own temperament. "You may think to possess a *joie de vivre*," he wrote challengingly to an imagined, complacent public, "but only on condition of stuffing your ears and closing your eyes. Do people even have time to see, or only when reality slaps them in the face, or transports them in a happy vision, all by accident?"[9] If anything, Rouault always sought to distance himself from his contemporaries.

Since Rouault's aesthetic proclivities and personal disposition run afoul of Fauvism's hedonistic bent, the term "Expressionism" is, and with good reason, occasionally bandied about the literature. In many respects, the works of Rouault and the Expressionists are perfectly aligned; the formal distortions associated with that movement, and, more to the point, its subjective, pessimistic streak resonate more powerfully with Rouault's worldview. But, here again, critics and historians expressed reservations. Fabrice Hergott, for instance, wrote that the "extensible label of expressionist fits him particularly ill."[10] Even more importantly perhaps, Rouault himself refused to embrace it. "Do I not, as they say, specialize in ugliness; am I not the cerebral father of Expressionism? I can say that I have never angled for these titles."[11] For a Frenchman, or for an entire Gallic cultural establishment not untouched by a succession of major military

conflicts with Germany, perhaps Expressionism provided a national origin too Teutonic with which to seek association. Rouault, after all, was born during the Commune, when Paris was bombed in the civil unrest following the Franco-Prussian War.

All the same, Expressionism is not completely absent from the French artistic landscape[12]; and, from the German side, contemporary critics were not above stressing Rouault's formal, thematic, and philosophical affinities with the work of their compatriots, especially in the wake of Rouault's 1925 exhibition at the Alfred Flechtheim Gallery in Berlin. Fritz Stahl, for one, was actually willing to bestow aesthetic priority to the Frenchman: "We were told that it was the ecstatic nature of the Germanic spirit that pushed so many artists to mock formal convention better to express what they felt. We were assured that those who could not comprehend this revolution were nothing but fossils and old fogies. And now comes this exhibition of Rouault that allows us to see where all these ecstatic German artists have culled their means of expression! It all comes from Rouault! The biting line, the ravaged faces.... Even the technique of dark brush strokes and the stains of color distributed here and there..."[13] German critics, then, were far more disposed than either their French counterparts (or the artist himself) to set their national loyalties aside and acknowledge affinities between Rouault and Expressionism. At his most generous, the artist did not reject the connection altogether, so long, of course, as he could assert his independence, indifference, and chronological primacy: "People speak of the 'expressionists.' For more than thirty years, have I been an expressionist? People are willing to affirm it, but I knew nothing of, and do not concern myself over, it."[14] Perhaps, it was not the association with Expressionism *specifically*, as much as the association with any aesthetic trend whatsoever that drew Rouault's ire. A risky strategy; as insinuated above, affiliations with collective groups provide the very explanatory frames critics often require to establish an artist's position in history. Rouault chose an opposite, though no less self-serving, tack. By asserting his autonomy from Expressionism or any other movement, he sought to convince others of his absolute originality and unique status. If the art historical literature provides any indication, the artist was an unqualified success. Most scholars, as will be shown below, are persuaded that Rouault's singularity is to be prized, not only for the importance and value of his achievement, but also as a foil to the collective aesthetics characteristic of early twentieth century art.

Consequently, any potential correlations with Expressionism, if mentioned in the literature at all, are acknowledged almost begrudgingly. One of the few critics to have accepted the designation was James Thrall Soby. "The paintings of both Rouault and the Fauves were Expressionist," he writes, "a term usually defined as describing an art of inner vision as opposed to outer reality. But to the decorative Expressionism of Matisse, Derain, Friesz and the other Fauves, Rouault opposed a psychological Expressionism, sharper in emotion and more specific in protest.... Rouault nevertheless has steadfastly remained an Expressionist throughout his career."[15] Another was Anthony Blunt, who saw in some of Rouault's statements on the evocation of powerful emotions in art "a concise statement of the Expressionist point of view."[16] Even so, Soby and Blunt's observations are made in passing, and with little investigation of the potential depth and scope of the connection. Some have rejoined, of course, that such an investigation would be misguided from the outset: it contradicts the artist's rhetoric about the uniqueness of his artistic status and, of all the "isms" mentioned above, Expressionism is among the most difficult to define. Its emphasis on subjective experience is difficult to evaluate critically, and its formal parameters are relatively more fluid than, say, those of Cubism or Futurism, and often overlap with strategies associated with other modernist tendencies. If defined too broadly, they say, Expressionism may mean anything; if too narrowly, it may mean nothing.[17] This is a fair criticism, to be sure; but, from the other side, it may be proposed that it is the very elasticity and amplitude of the "Expressionist" label that permits Rouault's inclusion. As late as 2006, after all, Fabrice Hergott reasoned that Rouault is a "modern painter for whom a theoretical framework has yet

to be established."[18] By connecting his work more closely to Expressionism, perhaps the rudiments of such a framework may begin to emerge.

At the cost of infringing upon the artist's autonomy, then, or irritating those determined to demarcate him from his contemporaries, this essay will be devoted to the proposition that any rapprochement between Rouault and Expressionism is entirely justified. Among the points Rouault makes most emphatically, for instance, is that art is the product of a purely intuitive process. Not without a certain degree of pride, he professed that, as an artist, he had "calculated nothing."[19] To his mind, "intelligence and erudition" are not just superfluous; they are even "detrimental to an artist's innate sense of pictorial equilibrium."[20] To over-intellectualize is inimical to creativity because art is, first and foremost, an activity of doing, not talking: "To talk of art is ridiculous; better to make it, however imperfectly."[21] His own production, he declared, was "the most hermetic of all or the least deciphered,—Still virgin territory."[22] Since the meaning of art (and his own most of all) cannot be articulated discursively, Rouault ceaselessly impugned those who assume that painting is made "with the tip of one's tongue rather than with brushes and color, and there are still many of them, those soiling rhetoricians of nothingness."[23] Art, he also proclaimed, "is a language still unknown to those who speak about it, incomprehensibly, with false humility, or with such boasting; who patronize and think that everything is acquired through bookish learning…"[24]

The Expressionists voiced a similar point of view. That art was an intuitive, unverbalizable process is a continual refrain in their statements. "[A] picture," Edvard Munch declared, "cannot be explained."[25] While writing to Gustav Schiefler, Karl Schmidt-Rottluff avowed: "I would give you some 'explanations' about the new things [I created] if I were not convinced that they would be absurdities, aside from the fact that it would scarcely help you. Besides, during intellectual discussions I easily get lost in uncertainties, which does not happen so easily when I am engaged in creative activity; there I have an almost real world under my fingers."[26] When asked to provide an explanation of his art, Max Beckmann likewise affirmed that: "an explanation…is nearly impossible to give."[27] The German painter Nolde, moreover, prided himself on having only read a handful of books in his life, so convinced he was of the deleterious influence of the intellect on an artist. For his part, Rouault constantly reiterated his own suspicion of theory, reinforcing the impression that the artist harbors a naïve, almost innocent perception of the world. "As soon as one paints," he contends, "one must *forget everything*."[28] The distrust of the intellect, and of any verbal analysis of art, in turn, helped engender an analogy between the artist and the child. In this way, artists could distance themselves from anything programmatic, and persuade their audience that their art remained untainted by the calculating, selfish motives of adults. "When I was a little child," Rouault wrote to his friend, the writer André Suarès, "a face or a landscape awakened in *me a whole world*…I could not help but dream about it and to live from its memory (…) I continued to be the same child in trying by *my own* means, awkward if you will, (…) to speak my emotion."[29] "I am mad for painting," he also wrote, "and like every child, I hope and still dream at some enchanted garden, a Promised Land where I will not be allowed to enter during my lifetime."[30]

Again, Rouault's position echoes that of the Expressionists. In their manifesto, the German artists of the Brücke group rejected any association with an ossified establishment, and called on the power of youth to regenerate the arts. Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, the author of the piece, which appeared as a woodcut in 1906, called upon "the youth of today to create freedom of movement, freedom to live, freedom against the older established forces…. All who express directly and truthfully what urges them to create are one of us."[31] In one of his poems, moreover, the Viennese painter Egon Schiele refers to himself as an "eternal child."[32] And for Franz Marc, even the approximation of child-like innocence was not enough; "Is there a more mysterious idea," he asked, "for an artist than to imagine how nature is reflected in the eyes of an animal? How does a horse see the world, how does an eagle, a doe, a dog?"[33]

The claim for innocence was not accidental. It resurrected an old debate in ethical philosophy

as to whether a genuinely good person acts morally by instinct or by intellectual deliberation. The Socratic tradition argued in favor of rational choice (how could ethical behavior be the result of mere accident?). Philosophers such as Kierkegaard and Nietzsche (who had a substantive impact on the Expressionist movement) argued the reverse: that the ethical person acted in a natural, instinctive way, without having to intellectualize (if performed reluctantly, contrary to the agent's natural inclinations, how could an action, no matter how salutary, be called moral?). A similar argument was made with respect to religion. Rouault praised non-Western cultures because their art was not self-consciously religious: "It was their nature, or perhaps their way of looking at things, their way of feeling—of loving. Religion and life were one for them, faith their reason for living."[34] Nolde shared the same outlook. "These primitive people," he wrote, "within their natural surroundings, are one with it and part of the great unity of being. At times I have the feeling that they are the only real humans, that we are some sort of overeducated mannequins, artificial and filled with dark longings."[35] "Faith," Nolde observed elsewhere, "is easy for the simple-minded. His convictions are built on a rock unshaken by doubt. In the absence of knowledge, dedicated piety has all the room."[36] (It is perhaps not surprising that both Rouault and Nolde frequently represented non-Western individuals.) The philosopher Jacques Maritain, an intimate of Rouault who frequently defended him in print, and whose own ideas on aesthetics were likely conceptualized in collaboration with the artist,[37] expressed a remarkably similar point of view. "Do not separate your art from your faith," Maritain writes, but do so instinctively, without advocating a programmatic agenda: "If you make of your devotion a rule of creative operation, you will ruin your faith, or if you make the task of edification into a creative process, you will ruin your art."[38]

Maritain's position dovetails nicely with Kierkegaard's, especially insofar as the Danish thinker construed moral actions as acts of faith, leaps into the unknown, sometimes inconsistent with, or in violation of, agreed principles of correct conduct. Kierkegaard even spoke of a "teleological suspension of the ethical," a condition when normative ethics (the prohibition against murder, for example) conflicts with a higher duty (as when God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son, Isaac). Rouault was motivated by analogous ideas. "Art," he declared, "is infinitely beyond the ethical."[39] This is not to say, of course, that Rouault felt his art to be amoral. On the contrary, its religious slant, he believed, endowed it with an intense moral dimension; but that dimension was meant to function in an intuitive, rather than declamatory or proselytizing way. If "Faith for him," according to William Dyrness, "…demanded absolute abandon,"[40] art did as well.

By foregrounding the importance of intuition, Rouault and the Expressionists—whether unwittingly or, more likely, by design—sought to establish and justify a moral as well as aesthetic high ground for their art. Their work was presented as uncalculated, free from artificiality and pretense and, as a result, authentic and incorruptible. By implication, the broader religious connotations of such work was not contingent on its overt subject matter, but on the spiritual disposition of its creator(s), a disposition that may imbue an entire aesthetic with the qualities mentioned above ("Everything in my work," Rouault professed, "is religious."[41]). With such pronouncements, the artist could clearly demarcate his own production from its counter-pole: an art devoid of spiritual values, whose artifice betrays its capitulation to the demands of a commercial and profit-seeking art market. No wonder, then, the intuitive nature of Rouault's art, whose authority derives from its having captured a basic, human essence (the same essence from which an innocent "goodness" stems), is claimed to be untranslatable—particularly to those who would exploit such explanations for personal gain. In this way, a suspicion of art theory and philosophical exposition also contributed to a certain underlying "anti-intellectualism" in the attitude of both Rouault and many German Expressionists, an attitude that construed the intellect as an extraneous imposition impeding the natural propensities of the "authentic" human being.

To create in such a way as to reflect that natural authenticity, however, mandated techniques

different from those prescribed by conventional training. The looseness of Rouault's painterly execution—sometimes even referred to as "gestural"—and his love of physical *matière* underscore the very activity of making, two characteristics that (though no doubt also inherited from his teacher, Gustave Moreau[42]) have long been recognized as emblematic of Expressionist art. Working in painting or in ceramics, Rouault himself declared: "*I will never satisfy myself* with a *facile* process."[43] For him, and for the Expressionists as well, art was not a matter of technical ability, but of arduous labor, the result of which betrayed the resistance offered by the medium, and the effort and strain required to overcome it. (It is not for nothing that, during the first decade of the twentieth century, Rouault was still unsure whether to devote his energy primarily to painting or ceramics.) In 1910, Jacques Rivière noted that Rouault's images "always seem to have been summoned with feverish fingers…not laid down quietly on the paper, but wrested from it by a slashing technique of incisions, spurts, and violent deformations."[44] What characterizes Rouault's working process, according to Sarah Whitfield, is a "multiplicity of strokes" and a "constant repositioning of…contour."[45] The artist's canvases, according to Pierre Courthion, give "the impression of a battlefield: piled up, kneaded and rekneaded, touched and retouched, pounded mercilessly.... Here we recognize the marks of hard labor, the sweat of he artist's brow tinged with his lifeblood, in an almost sculptured relief. The entire picture vibrates with the painter's touch."[46] This effort and strain, of course, was never envisioned as an end in itself; it provided, rather, a means of allowing the artist's inner psychology or emotional state to emerge, ostensibly, as directly and immediately as possible. In blatant opposition to those who think of art as an exercise in flamboyant virtuosity, "The hand," Rouault liked to say, "is only the docile servant of an awakened spirit."[47] Art, he also proclaimed, was nothing if not an "ardent confession or a communion on our terms and with our means of expression."[48] In all things, Rouault wanted to see to the inner core of the creator: "The man I have before me," he wrote to Edouard Schuré, "it is his soul that I want to see…"[49]

The German Expressionists thought along identical lines. For them, spontaneity and impulsiveness were the only means of circumventing traditional modes of execution and heeding Nietzsche's call for Dionysian "intoxication," "extreme agitation," and a "discharging of emotions."[50] In a letter to a patron, Emil Nolde admitted to employing a "certain amount of carefree playfulness" in his pieces. If he "were to 'correct,' in the academic sense" evidence of his mistakes, or changes of mind, then "this effect would not even be vaguely approached."[51] Similarly, Erich Heckel proclaimed that: "everything programmatic is to be rejected."[52] Such spontaneous execution would allow the spectator, in turn, to infer, simply from perusing the marks left on the works, the state of the artist's mind at the time of creation. Not surprisingly, many of the German Expressionists, as Rouault did himself, often practiced the graphic arts: media where evidence of technique and physical activity might be more readily evident. Not surprisingly, many of the members of the Brücke favored woodcuts above all. "The artist's personality," for Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, "is more intimately represented when he constructs the incisions by hand than when etching with acid."[53] And Max Pechstein likewise articulated the view that so subtle a feature as the "depth of the knifecut" could be so expressive as to reveal "either the agitation or composure of the worker."[54] The same could be said of Rouault: "They give me a piece of copper," he reminisced, "and I rip right into it."[55]

In order to find means of expression "adequate," as Rouault put it, to the artist's "*inner* desire" and "*need*,"[56] it was imperative to avoid anything that smacked of "virtuosity, routine, convention."[57] Even Fabrice Hergott, who was cited above as saying that the Expressionist label fits Rouault especially ill, could not help notice how closely these words recall those employed by, say, Wassily Kandinsky, when describing artistic pursuits as resulting from some "yearning" or "inner urge."[58] (It should be mentioned, if only parenthetically, that it was Kandinsky's interest in Rouault's work that prompted the latter to exhibit at the second Neue Künstlervereinigung exhibition in 1910[59]). To express this "inner need or desire," Rouault added, "accent is everything."[60]

Rouault never clarified what he meant here; but one may interpret "accent" to denote the ways in which artists can inflect the medium so as to endow their materials with a personal and distinctive touch. Attention to subject matter, after all, although significant, may be insufficient to generate an effective work of art if that subject is not depicted by appropriate means. The artist must manipulate those means in so engaging a way as to make them expressive in and of themselves. "The merest stroke or rubbing," Rouault professed, "tells us more than so many indigestible books."[61] "My form and color and the gangue of my thought; they are worth what my thoughts are worth or, at least, my emotions."[62] When discussing the work of Daumier, Rouault put it most succinctly: "The great subjects do not count as much as the gifts, the force, and love of those who treat them."[63]

Given the above, it is intriguing to note that, in spite of Rouault's concern with the singularity of his process, with the idiosyncrasy of his accent, he was also fascinated with the artistic ethos of the Middle Ages, more specifically, with the collective work of Medieval craftsmen working on large-scale architectural projects such as monuments and Cathedrals. If taken as models, he argued, these collective endeavors would provide salutary alternatives to the cult of personality he saw as endemic to the modern age: "Was not the anonymous worker, laboring on some grandiose project, not superior to so many pseudo-personalities of our own time, when the ideal collaboration between architect, painter, and sculptor is abolished? The art of the Cathedrals is both collective and personal."[64]

These dual mandates—to express the individuality of the creator, and to subordinate that individuality to a higher calling—may seem contradictory. Yet the German Expressionists of the Brücke group, among others, also shared this dyadic fascination. Just as Rouault drew inspiration from stained glass windows, so did his German contemporaries approximate the formal solutions of Gothic sculptures and Early Renaissance prints. Emulating the anonymity typical of medieval guilds, moreover, these artists occasionally declined to sign their works (although, in other circumstances, they were, ironically enough, no less fiercely individualistic than Rouault himself). From their perspective, the ethos and techniques of medieval craftsmen represented an obvious alternative to the excessive mechanization and impersonality of modern industry and technology. Rouault concurred; and a similar tension among individualism and collectivism is in evidence in his own statements. On the one hand, he expressed the following view: "Without fearing the accusation of forced individualism," he wrote, "one must find one's own niche."[65] On the other, he wrote that, even if it is an arduous and ungrateful task, forcing the creator to live at the margins of his society, art is well worth the effort since it will result in nothing less than "the erection of cathedrals" and "slay the monster of *individualism*."[66] He even claimed to "have dreamed of an anonymous art, while all were clamoring for me to sign this or that, miserable state."[67]

These discrepancies are indeed difficult to reconcile; Rouault admitted as much himself: "If some Mr. X would say with common sense and precision: 'What is exasperating about you is that you contradict yourself' why even reply?...to achieve [my goal] one needs something other than 'common sense.' "[68] Rouault's explanations are not especially helpful. As the logician M. R. Haight put it: "Denying the law of non-contradiction does not give a new way of understanding, it makes 'understand' unusable. So if A understands any statement of the form 'p and ~p' [i.e., p and not-p] he cannot sincerely assent to it (that is if he treats it literally); and if he thinks that he assents to it, he does not understand it."[69] Haight hits the nail right on the head. Rouault's statement *is* unusable—unusable, unless one again relocates Rouault's work within the general orbit of Expressionism: contradiction, Donald Gordon argues, is a characteristic interpretive marker of the Expressionist image.[70] Not surprisingly, Walt Whitman, who made no bones about communicating at cross-purposes ("Do I contradict myself? Very well then I contradict myself"[71]), was especially popular among the Expressionists; Kirchner, for one, called *Leaves of Grass*, from which the above citation derives, "my best friend."[72]

Yet Rouault did not simply endeavor, as did many Expressionists, to exempt his pronouncements from the rule of logic and the law

of non-contradiction. Duality also permeates the characters to which he frequently returned: clowns and prostitutes. Ever since the eighteenth century, for example, the clown played an ambivalent role in mainstream culture. His itinerant lifestyle invariably condemned him to a position of outcast in the very society his function it was to entertain; for Rouault, this marginal status earned traveling troupes the "hatred of those who are sedentary… like mollusks attached to a rock."[73] Intriguingly, some scholars have argued that Rouault's representations of clowns are unflattering, marked, as Soo Yun Kang put it, by a "caricatural manner that displays their features [as] hideously boorish and uncouth."[74] To be sure, Rouault's images are hardly idealized, but, in his statements, he unequivocally confessed to coveting the clown's solitary lifestyle, his state of freedom, and his ability to dream.[75] Kang herself proposes that Rouault's idea of the clown may have been inflected, if only partially, by Alfred Jarry, a poet whose political anarchism encouraged a "critical denunciation of the organized, civilized life."[76] In which case, the artist would have envied and celebrated rather than impugned or ridiculed the clown's independence, the very quality, as is well known, Rouault prized above all others.

Many clowns, moreover, performed skits with unmistakable political undertones, making them the target of frequent censure and police harassment. The resulting tensions helped forge the widely disseminated, paradoxical topos of the "sad clown," ostracized by the very culture his profession is to amuse, hiding his feelings behind a mask, making a living from dissimulation and counterfeit. "If he is hurt," Rouault writes, "he must not reveal it."[77] But it is not simply the clown's predicament that is contradictory; so is Rouault's own response. On the one hand, Rouault empathized with the sad clown, seeing his uncomfortable position as somehow analogous to that of the modern artist: "their laughter," Rouault observed, "is familiar to me, it touches the alienation resulting from *repressed tears* and bitter resignation *that I know all too well*."[78] On the other, he construed the activity of performance, the layering of make-up, and the wearing of a mask, as emblematic of an artificiality at odds with anything natural and authentic: "I saw clearly that I am the 'Buffoon,'" Rouault wrote in an oft-cited letter to Edouard Schuré, "we *all* are…almost *all of us*…This *rich and sequined* habit that we wear, it is life that bestows it upon us, we are all *more or less jesters*, we all wear this sequined habit."[79] "My own fault," he continues, "lies in leaving no one his *sequined habit*, be he king or emperor."[80]

The polyvalence of Rouault's reading of clowns has not received the attention it deserves in the literature. Soo Yun Kang did notice a bifurcation in Rouault's statements—that the clown can stand for the genuine suffering of the alienated, as well as the pretense and artificiality of a kingly costume[81]—yet how the same figure can convey such mixed messages weakens the claims for a direct, immediate mode of communication often attributed to (as well as voiced by) the artist. This very tension, as well as a concern for contradiction in general, also intersects, as already intimated above, the broader phenomenon of Expressionism.

Undeniably, Rouault's images of clowns were indebted to the work of Honoré Daumier, an artist often classified with Realists such as François Millet and Gustave Courbet; but it should also be said that Daumier's fascination with gesture, body language, and physiognomic expression counts him among Expressionism's most important precursors.[82] (It may also be worth mentioning, if only parenthetically, that some of the other artists Rouault admired, Mathias Grünewald and Rembrandt,[83] were also highly praised by the Expressionists.) It is no surprise, therefore, that the iconography of clowns and performers, though having a long history in art and literature, frequently appears in the work of Expressionists such as Munch, Kirchner, Nolde, Beckmann, and Kokoschka, who, like Rouault, sympathized with these itinerant troupes. And if Rouault also construed the performer as emblematic of the artificiality of modern existence, so did Nolde. "I sketched this dark side of life," he recalled, "with its make-up, with its slimy dirt and its corruption…. These people weren't important to me; they came and danced…and I captured on paper only what seemed essential to me. It was often oppressive in these depths among all the light-headed happy and miserable people."[84]

A similar dichotomy may also be detected in Rouault's fascination with the prostitute: a person chastised for her complicity in fulfilling the carnal desire of others, a desire unfairly attributed and attached exclusively to her. No doubt, this fascination owes much to the numerous precedents found in the work of Constantin Guys or Edgar Degas, the latter an artist about whom Rouault wrote and expressed deep regard; yet the spin often ascribed to Rouault's images contravenes his predecessors' aspiration to scrutinize urban life through the emotionally detached viewpoint of the *flâneur*. Soo Yun Kang, for one, argued that Rouault "did not provide a truly accurate picture"[85] of the prostitute, only rendering her "in accordance to the prevalent prejudices"[86] of the time. In so doing, Rouault "disfigures his prostitutes not only in order to portray them as ominous agents of death, but also to destroy them because he fears them."[87] Rouault, she concludes, visualized the prostitute "as his generation saw her—as a desirable and sensuous yet depraved, infected predator to be dreaded and avoided."[88] If Kang's interpretation of Rouault's prostitutes as reflective of the contemporary negative stereotypes of the day is consistent with her reading of the clowns as caricatural, it also runs counter to her alternative readings of the clowns as awakening "the free, anarchic, carnivalesque self in Rouault."[89] Of course, the prostitute, then as now, endured the condemnation of the larger culture, as much for her "immoral" life as for the widespread dissemination of sexually transmitted diseases. In fact, many commentators on Rouault's art stressed these very points (Gustave Coquiot, for example, spoke of the "guilty woman…gnawed by syphilis and skin infections"[90]). Rouault realized, however, that few women enter prostitution willingly, a profession forced on them by economic hardship. "I never pretended to be 'vengeful' or 'moralizing,'" he declared, "There are such accents in the faces of my 'Girls,' that some felt that I set out to show the ignominy of these creatures. But I only saw this ignominy after it was shown to me. I only felt pity for them."[91] On this basis, Pierre Courthion's reading is more persuasive: "Under his touch, the *fille de joie* becomes a symbol, the symbol of corruption, through money, of a great part of humanity, the expiatory victim of our society."[92] On this account, it is no so much the "vulgarity" of the prostitute that is the target of Rouault's acerbic vision as a callous society in which such degradation is permitted to become habitual, even commonplace. Thus, although Kang makes the valid observation that Rouault did not portray the prostitute accurately, her interpretation of these images as reflective of fear and revulsion misses the mark. Ironically, Courthion's assessment is consistent with the way she herself stresses (as many others have) the impact of Léon Bloy's work on Rouault, most specifically, Bloy's ideas on the inescapability, even inherent dignity and nobility, of suffering.[93] Later in her book, Kang even reverses her position, now aligning it with Courthion's. "The prostitute and the clown," she writes, "the two prominent characters in Rouault's oeuvre, stand for all the underdogs in society. Through their endurance of intense misery, they gain the privilege of taking the positions of saints and partake of the divinity" of Christ."[94]

The meanings of Rouault's images, arguably, as those of all works of art, are not transparent and self-declaring, embedded in paint as bricks in mortar; whether we construe his prostitutes as helpless victims or agents of corruption, as a reflection of societal prejudice or as its negation, our readings will be skewed by our foreknowledge of the artist's own attitudes. If we assume Rouault to have adopted a censorial or sympathetic standpoint, our interpretations will shift accordingly; the images may be the same, but our perspective toward them will change. The philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein made an analogous point when he wrote about our natural responses to a smiling face. We may assume that such an expression is clear, unambiguous, and in no need of interpretation. But what would we make of that face, the philosopher asks, if we saw it smiling at a small child and, then, smiling at the demise of an enemy? Rouault himself betrayed how mutable the meanings of his images could prove when he admitted that, while he had never harbored such intentions himself, he could see how a spectator could construe his images as evoking the "ignominy" of prostitutes.

The theme of victimization might have emerged in sharper focus had Rouault decided to

depict both prostitutes and customers within the same visual field, as he did when occasionally portraying condemned men in proximity to judges and policemen, leaving it ambiguous as to whom is guilty and whom blameless.[95] It may never have been Rouault's intention, of course, to convey the culturally specific asymmetrical power relations between the sexes and classes, or to foreground the mercantile aspect of prostitution. Had he done so, however, one may conjecture that the male protagonists would not have been spared Rouault's caustic attack. Regardless, his sympathetic disposition may yet dovetail nicely with those of the German Expressionists, who also sought to represent the prostitute from a more compassionate perspective. In fact, the members of the Brücke may even have outdone Rouault on that score, seeing the prostitute in a positive, albeit romanticized, light: namely, as a transgressive figure, in touch with her sexuality and thus acting outside the narrow, oppressive moral codes of a hypocritical middle-class.

Rouault's images of prostitutes also share communalities with those of Egon Schiele. Like Rouault, Schiele often represented female models with select articles of clothing (stockings, shoes, skirts) that, for many male spectators, provide unequivocal signals of their profession. And while Schiele's images may exceed Rouault's in sexual explicitness, the body types depicted, and the decaying state of the bodies themselves, parallel the Frenchman's concern for lack of idealization, for rejecting canonical standards of beauty, and for injecting a reminder of mortality in a subject normally devoted to the celebration of external appearance. Along these lines, it may be worth mentioning, if only parenthetically, that even stronger analogies exist with the deliberate accentuation of the grotesque in the work of artists of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* movement, e.g., Georg Grosz and Otto Dix, as much for their markedly anti-bourgeois images, as for their use of the theme of prostitution to debunk the ideal of the female nude. These artists may have reacted against the Expressionists' obsession with private, subjective experience, and had hoped to provide clearer statements about the social and political iniquities of the inter-war years, but the level of distortion practiced in many of their works still owes much to their Expressionist predecessors. Unlike Rouault, however, who never depicted prostitutes in proximity to their male clients, and who made images whose ideological edge was difficult to construe as a result, Grosz and Dix did precisely that, and became, if the reader will pardon the phrase, equal opportunity offenders.

What led Rouault to empathize with clowns and prostitutes also led him to empathize with Christ (as Soo Yun Kang put it: "Rouault probably also meant his sad clowns to represent Christ in Passion. As Christ does in Ecce Homo, the clowns expose their vulnerability to the public, who have the power to condemn or to pardon him for being different from themselves."[96]) The work of art, in Rouault's view, is nothing other than an unmediated confession, a Christ-like laying bare of the artist's innermost life to the audience. "I was nearly torn asunder," Rouault writes to Suarès, "by hanging my paintings on the wall last Saturday, feeling more embarrassed than if I were naked in front of the public, these being my most secret of confidences, my purest of emotions, that I am exhibiting…"[97] Intriguingly, these words were the very ones Rouault employed to describe the plight of Christ: "The force of Jesus is in his nakedness. That is why he horrifies so many of these good people…. Far from those human consolations, I am like an old servant, misunderstood, misfortunate, and bitter also. The conscience of any artist worthy of the name is, without exaggeration, an incurable leprosy that is paid in infinite torments but also, sometimes, in silent joys."[98]

Rouault's reaction was not unique. A rejection of the intellectual and epistemological assumptions underlying mid-nineteenth-century positivistic philosophy and empirical science prompted, as we have already noted, many artists to focus on matters religious, though without necessarily deploying overtly religious iconography. Jacques Maritain, for example, said that Rouault's work had "a profound religious signification," but that "the religious nature of a work does not depend on its subject but on its

spirit."[99] A broad concern for things spiritual was widespread among Expressionist artists: although Munch rarely depicted conventional Christian iconography, and was hostile to organized religion, he nonetheless declared that the members of his audience "should understand the sacred, awesome truth involved, and should remove their hats as in a church."[100] Kandinsky, among the most vocal in this regard, and far less hesitant than Munch to appropriate overtly Christian themes, even titled an entire treatise: *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*.

Beyond a concern for things spiritual, Rouault's strong personal identification with Christ ("Being Christian," he wrote, "I believe, in these hazardous times, only in Christ on the Cross"[101]) also locates his work comfortably within the compass of Expressionism. On this point, it is thus perplexing that a critic such as Sarah Whitfield claimed that Rouault "shares little of the introspection of [Expressionist] painters like Ernst Ludwig Kirchner who, for instance, when painting a self-portrait throws himself into a role, taking the part of *The Drinker* or *The Soldier*. If there is a measure of self-identification with the clowns it is no greater than our own."[102] Whitfield's reading is vulnerable on a number of points. First, the distinction between Rouault and Kirchner is contradicted by Kang's more persuasive view that Rouault "produced a limited number of social types."[103] Second, her claim for Rouault's rather limited identification with the clown is gainsaid in the artist's letters to Suarès cited above. And third, her argument dismayingly excludes the image of Christ, which could easily be considered a displaced self-portrait of the artist. Rouault's most celebrated self-representation (*The Apprentice* of 1925 at the Pompidou Center in Paris), for example, depicts the artist with a hat whose overall effect approximates that of a halo, which is also said of the most obvious prototype for Rouault's image: Antoine Watteau's representation of *Gilles* in the Louvre, a character whose overall impression is also conspicuously Christ-like. In which case, and in opposition to Whitfield's argument, one may posit that an Expressionist propensity, like Kirchner's, toward emotive introspection and "throwing one's self into a role" is hardly antithetical, but even integral to Rouault's work.

This propensity, in turn, is frequently found in Expressionist art. In his diaries, for instance, Nolde confessed how powerfully the figure of Christ affected him: "After school...driven by thoughts and vague feelings, I would sometimes take a lonely walk in the country. In a high cornfield, seen by no one, I lay down with my back pressed to the ground and my eyes closed, with my arms stretched out stiffly. And then I thought, 'So lay our Savior Jesus Christ when the men and women took Him down from the cross.'"[104] Not only did artists such as Nolde, Beckmann, Munch, Schmidt-Rottluff, Pechstein, Schiele, Max Oppenheimer, or Ernst Barlach portray religious iconography, but many of them also painted self-portraits in the guise of Christ, Saint Sebastian, or John the Baptist. Although personally resistant to what he called "dogmatic religion," for example, Oskar Kokoschka admitted in his autobiography that the "intellectual atmosphere of Catholicism long held me under its spell."[105] He even spoke of his personal heroes—Calderón, Cervantes, Shakespeare, Montaigne, Voltaire—not only in religious but in specifically Christian terms. "They all experienced," he writes, "the mystery of the divine incarnate in the son of Man: God become man, denied, despised, tortured, delivered to the hangman by false judges and the hypocritical Pilate, and nailed to the Cross. The Passion is the eternal story of man. Even the miracle of the Resurrection can be understood in human terms, if it is grasped as a truth of the inner life."[106] By the very act of depicting himself as Christ, then, Kokoschka purports (as did many artists of his generation) to join this select, exclusive company. On this account, Rouault's image is hardly unusual. Many turn-of-the-century artists found in Christian iconography an effective path of escape from what they saw as an increasingly materialistic and impersonal culture, and, in the figure of Christ (or some other saint undergoing temptation or martyrdom) a means of visualizing what they saw as their unfair treatment by an indifferent and unfeeling public. [107] Not surprisingly, Rouault described art as a "holy vocation,"[108] and often referred to the authentic artist as a solitary "pilgrim."[109] When he wrote an essay on Paul Cézanne, moreover, he actually titled it "Noli me tangere,"[110] an unmistakable

reference to Christ's words to Mary Magdalen after the resurrection ("do not touch me, I am not of this world").[111] His art may have gone unnoticed or misunderstood; yet he was not above proclaiming that: "Alone, Jesus, bleeding, was willing to listen to me."[112]

On this account, contrarily to what Nadine Lehni grudgingly concedes as a mere "point of encounter between the developments of French and German art,"[113] many facets of Rouault's production fall very comfortably within the general orbit of Expressionism. The formal and thematic intersections outlined in these pages, though hardly obscure, are numerous enough to have warranted greater attention than they have hitherto received in the literature. Perhaps students and admirers of Rouault's work have remained uninterested in the intellectual ethos and impetus of Expressionism to detect these communalities; or, in greater likelihood, they were conveniently overlooked to avoid those same admirers from having to soften, if not re-think, their stated positions on the artist's originality. Regardless, the extent of these parallels invites further investigation, not simply of the affinities between Rouault and the Expressionists, but also of the strikingly similar rhetorical strategies they employed to legitimize their art. The motivations underlying these strategies have received even less attention in Rouault scholarship, scholarship that has had a tendency, as insinuated above, to accept the artist's writings and pronouncements with a surprising lack of criticality.

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Endnotes

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3 Éric Darragon, "Georges Rouault: Exclusivement peintre parmi les peintres," *Georges Rouault "Forme, couleur, harmonie"* (Strasbourg: Musée d'art moderne et contemporain de Strasbourg, 2006) 73.

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19 "Stella Vespertina," *Sur l'art et sur la vie*, 134.

20 "En marge des doctrines," *Sur l'art et sur la vie*, 113.

21 *Georges Rouault – André Suarès Correspondance*, 77.

22 "Jeu Pictural," *Sur l'art et sur la vie*, 44.
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36 Emil Nolde, *Jahre der Kämpfe. 1902-1914* (Berlin: Rembrandt Verlag, 1934) 107.
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113. I would like to thank my colleague Jeffery Howe for bringing this quote to my attention.

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74 Kang, *Rouault in Perspective* 66.

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95 Kang, *Rouault in Perspective*, 117.

96 Kang, *Rouault in Perspective*, 91.

97 *Georges Rouault – André Suarès Correspondance*, 7.

98 "Stella Vespertina," *Sur l'art et sur la vie*, 129.

99 Maritain, *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 5, 764.

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101 "Parler Peinture," *Sur l'art et sur la vie*, 103.

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107 In 1889, Van Gogh executed a copy of Eugène Delacroix's Pietà but gave the Christ figure his own features. The painting hangs in the Rijksmuseum Vincent van Gogh, Amsterdam. Gauguin's identification with Christ is evidenced in a number of self-portraits: especially, *Christ in the Garden of Olives* (1889, Norton Gallery of Art, West Palm Beach) and *Self-portrait near Golgatha* (1896, Museu de Arte de São Paolo). In *Self-Portrait/Salome Paraphrase* (1898, Munch-Museet, Oslo), Edvard Munch depicted himself in the guise of St. John the Baptist: his decapitated head floats above a pool of blood imersed in the hair of a woman. In a drawing of 1886 entitled *Calvary* (Collection Imelda Delvaux), Ensor replaced the inscription (INRI) normally found above the crucified Christ is his own name (ENSOR); and in another drawing of 1888 entitled *Demons Tormenting Me* (Art Institute of Chicago), Ensor appears in the guise of a modern St. Anthony. In 1914, Egon Schiele portrayed himself as Saint Sebastian in *Self-portrait as St. Sebastian* of 1914 (private collection).

108 *Georges Rouault – André Suarès Correspondance*, 17.

109 "Parade," *Sur l'art et sur la vie*, 13, 19, 20.

110 "Noli me tangere," *Sur l'art et sur la vie*, 61ff.

111 It is also possible that, as Siegfried Gohr ("Rouault et Cézanne. La méthode picturale," *Rouault: Première Periode 1903-1920*, 26) and others have suggested, that there might be a pun here: an allusion to Cézanne's hatred of being touched: see Emile Bernard's recollections in *Conversations avec Cézanne*, ed. P. M. Doran (Paris: Macula, 1978) 69-70.

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Père Ubu: Archetype of Social Dysfunction

John J. Michalczyk

Before Tristan Tzara and his anarchistic Dadist poetry, before André Breton and Salvador Dali and their anti-bourgeois Surrealist film, *Un chien andalou*, and well before Samuel Beckett with his absurdist play *Waiting for Godot*, there was *Ubu Roi* (*King Ubu*, 1896) by the French playwright Alfred Jarry (1873-1907)! Jarry's infamous, scandalous play staged at the Théâtre de l'Oeuvre on December 10, 1896, shocked bourgeois society in France with its horrendous opening lines:

PÈRE UBU: Pschitt!
MÈRE UBU: Ooh! What a nasty word. Pa Ubu, you're a dirty old man.
PÈRE UBU: Watch out I don't bash yer nut in, Ma Ubu![1]

The play focuses on the character of the spineless Ubu, led on by his wife, a type of femme fatale, a conspiring woman in the lineage of Lady Macbeth.[2] The conniving Mère Ubu counsels Père Ubu, recently honored by King Wenceslaus of Poland, to slay the King and usurp the throne. Although he leaves the house banging the door behind him, she knows she has convinced him:

MÈRE UBU: Pfartt, pschitt, what a stingy bastard, but pfartt, pschitt, I think I've got him shifting all the same. Thanks be to God and myself, in a week, perhaps, I may be Queen of Poland.

Ubu's palace coup succeeds, and he immediately assumes control of the kingdom's finances by massacring the nobility:

PÈRE UBU: My lords, I have the honour to inform you that as a gesture to the economic welfare of my kingdom, I have resolved to liquidate the entire nobility and confiscate their goods.
NOBLES: Horror of horrors! Soldiers and citizens, defend us.
PÈRE UBU: Bring up the first Noble and pass me the boat-hook. Those who are condemned to death, I shall push through this trap door. They will fall down into the bleed-pig chambers, and will then proceed to the cash-room where they will be debrained.

After Ubu has slaughtered more than three hundred nobles and five hundred magistrates, he goes out collecting taxes from the peasants:

PÈRE UBU: I've changed the government and I've had it announced in the official gazette that all the present taxes have to be paid twice over, and all those I may think up later on will have to be paid three times over. With this system, I'll soon make a fortune: then I'll kill everyone in the world, and go away.

PEASANTS: Mercy, Lord Ubu, have pity on us.[3] We are poor, simple people.

PÈRE UBU: I couldn't care less. Pay up.

PEASANTS: But we can't, we've already paid.

PÈRE UBU: Fork out! Or I'll give you the works good and proper: torture, twisting of the neck, and decapitation. Honstrumpot, am I or am I not your King?…Advance, gentlemen of the Phynances, do your duty.

The house is razed to the ground and Ubu scoops up the cash. In the end, although the Queen dies, King Wenceslaus' son Bougrelas survives. The Russian Czar Alexis and his troops then expel Ubu, who makes his way back to France to become "Minister of Phynance." The play's final lines demonstrate Jarry's dark humor. When Mère Ubu remarks that she's heard Germany is a beautiful country, Père Ubu replies:

PÈRE UBU: Beautiful though it may be, it's not a patch on Poland. Ah gentlemen, there'll always be a Poland. Otherwise there wouldn't be any Poles!

Jarry's joke is that while there were Poles in 1896, there was not a "Poland." Exactly one century earlier, it had been partitioned between Russia, Prussia and Austria (1795). Hence the first line of its national anthem written two years later: "Jeszcze Polska nie zginela" ("Poland has not yet perished" [1797]).

The audience at this scandalous performance became enraged, reacting strongly to twenty-eight occurrences of the word "*merdre*," a neologism Jarry invented to strike a blow for artistic freedom. (Jarry remarked at a reception, "Taste! Shit on good taste!"[4]) There were moments of wild fist-shaking and major chaos in the theater, culminating in a theatrical civil war. His clever plan to create revolutionary theater with this outrageous example of black humor or dark comedy had succeeded.

Origins in France's Banquet Years

Ubu originated in the vision of some schoolboys at the Lycée de Rennes in Britanny as they toyed with the character of an asinine physics professor they despised, Félix-Fréderic Hébert. Hébert, an alumnus of the prestigious École Normale Supérieure, arrived at the lycée in October 1881. Fat and ugly with short-legs and a large paunch, his clothes often in disarray and his classroom performance appearing totally incompetent, Hébert soon became the butt of the students' wit and writings, at times dubbed "le P.H.," "le Père Heb," or "le Père Ebé." It was first in the years 1885 to 1887 that students Charles and Henri Morin first wrote an amateurish play about the fantastic adventures of Ubu in "Les Polonais" (The Poles), based on imaginary exploits of an Hébert-like fool.

Jarry, who enrolled in 1888, took some of the essence of this school play and went on to develop it into a biting socio-political satire of the times.[5] To the work of his school friends, he added indecency and impropriety for shock value, and at the same time, raised the level of satire beyond schoolboy adventures. Jarry's image of this humorous Ubu is witnessed in his own woodcut "Véritable portrait de Monsieur Ubu" crafted in 1896 (**fig. 1**). The buffoonish Ubu is cone-headed, sporting a large paunch with a spiraling circle on his protruding belly. A cane is under his right arm which fits snugly in

Fig 1. Alfred Jarry, *Veritable Portrait of Monsieur Ubu,* from *Ubu Roi: Drame en Cinq Actes* (Paris: Fasquelle Editeurs, 1900) 18.

his pocket. Jarry described his objective by quoting with approval a contemporary critic who said that the performance conveyed "eternal human imbecility, eternal hedonism (*luxure*), eternal binging (*goinfrerie*), the most despicable instinct established on tyranny; the prudishness, the virtues, the patriotism and the ideal of those who have dined well."[6] More recently, Keith Beaumont has portrayed Ubu this way: "Ubu represents quite simply Jarry's Everyman—vulgar, cruel, cowardly, gluttonous, avaricious, and above all stupid."[7]

In sum, Ubu physically embodied the bourgeois lust for food, power, and wealth during the French equivalent of the American "Gilded Age." Roger Shattuck's now-classic work dubbed this epoch as The Banquet Years:

> ...a time marked by conspicuous consumption: "a life of pompous display, frivolity, hypocrisy, cultivated taste, and relaxed morals" during which "the untaxed rich lived in shameless luxury and systematically brutalized le peuple with venal journalism, inspiring promises of progress and expanding empire, and cheap absinthe."[8]

From Jarry's Poland to Vollard's Africa

In 1901, Ambroise Vollard (1866-1939) collaborated with Jarry and published his *Almanach illustré du Père Ubu*. Following Jarry's untimely death in 1907, Vollard, who wanted to be a writer himself, bought the rights to the Ubu material envisioning future publications.[9] Born of a French father and Créole mother on the French island territory of La Réunion, Vollard would take Ubu out of the Poland that existed only as marginal parts of other countries and transport him to Africa, a place that had a marginality reflecting its author's. On the one hand, Vollard's colonialist origins, Créole accent, dark skin color, and mixed-race bloodline meant that he would never be fully accepted in Paris, the heart of the empire; on the other hand, Vollard's power could not be dismissed as he rose to become one of the most important art publishers and promoters of the avant-garde artists in France.[10]

Moving beyond Jarry's unmasking of bourgeois hypocrisy, the colonialist setting of Vollard's texts allowed him to revisit his childhood origins and critique France's sense of its manifest destiny, its *mission civilisatrice* (civilizing mission).[11] His preoccupation with French colonialism can be attributed in large part to the government's propagandistic desire to reflect its efforts in transforming its colonies from a "savage" to a "civilized" world, be it religiously, culturally, or financially.[12] Understanding colonization as a national vocation, France wished to show its power and glory in its dissemination of French culture, in the broadest sense, to less fortunate countries. In 1906, a government committee formed to exhibit diverse aspects of colonial life that had been only briefly touched upon in the celebrated 1900 Paris Exposition.

In a more self-serving way, France utilized the manpower and military potential of the colonies

especially during World War I when approximately 500,000 colonial inhabitants fought for French interests. At the end of that war in 1918, forty-seven countries considered French the national language. Four years later, Marseilles mounted a national colonial exposition, especially attempting to link the country with Muslim culture, despite protests that this presence would undermine French Christianity.

The most important of these colonial exhibitions appeared, somewhat fortuitously for Vollard, in the year 1931, just before the publication of the *Réincarnations du Père Ubu*.[13] The International Colonial Exposition at the Bois de Vincennes in Paris (May 4 - November 4, 1931) had been in the planning stages since 1927. More than 33 million people viewed the exhibitions. In his discourse at the Exposition, the Minister of Colonies Paul Reynaud proclaimed symbolically: "Nous avons apporté la lumière dans les ténèbres" ("We have brought light into the darkness"). These metaphors still lingered among Europeans who viewed Africa as "The Dark Continent" (Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*) for its mysterious and under-explored geographic areas.

However, the postwar decade of the 1920s had brought about enormous changes, including the development of the Communist Part (PCF) in the wake of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, and the Surrealist movement following the publication of André Breton's *First Surrealist Manifesto* in 1924. In 1931, both the Communists (PCF) and the Surrealists attacked the International Exhibition with tracts telling visitors to forego the colonial exposition and instead visit their own counter-exhibition, *La vérité sur les colonies* ("The truth about the colonies"), featuring humans in cages warning about the atrocities occurring in the colonial empire.[14] The Surrealists stated that the colonial exposition reflected a conquering, imperialist tone, for those colonies included in the exhibitions for the most part appeared as primitive and exotic, while the native population was depicted as naïve and inscrutable.

In short, during the years in which the *Réincarnations* was taking shape, colonialism was not only an integral part of French society; its political-cultural main event, the International Exposition (and the counter-exhibition, *The Truth about the Colonies*) took place throughout most of the year preceding Vollard's publication.

Rouault–Vollard Collaboration

To illustrate his texts, Vollard had always shunned "illustrators," and instead chose first- rate artists, like Pablo Picasso and Paul Cézanne, as he helped launch them in Paris. Writer André Suarès paid tribute to Vollard in the journal *Nouvelle Revue Française* for having brought to light the work of other painters: "He was the one [to assist] Manet, Redon, Gauguin, and countless others, the one for Bonnard, Rouault, Vuillard and Picasso."[15] For his projected *Réincarnations du Père Ubu*, Vollard initially considered the Realist and Impressionist Jean-Louis Forain as well as the Fauvist André Derain to create the designs for his Ubu text. Both declined the invitation.

Around 1915, Vollard then turned to Georges Rouault. Rouault agreed to the offer on the grounds that Vollard also publish the artist's *Miserere et Guerre*. In 1917, Vollard paid Rouault (following negotiations) for the purchase of 770 works in his atelier as a single lot and became the artist's exclusive dealer. Vollard was delighted that Rouault already had some preliminary sketches for his Ubu that could be integrated into the book. These included two works in gouache of the palace of Ubu, which has a mosque-like appearance (**fig. 2**).[16] In his essay for the 1945 Rouault retrospective exhibition at the New York Museum of Modern Art, James Thrall Soby described Rouault's use of this recurring image:

> The strange phallic mosque of the palace façade, Byzantine in spirit, was to become for him a dominant architectural image. It recurs in several of his landscapes, it appears in his ballet setting for "Prodigal Son" [1929], it reappears in prints of the Passion series [1939]. Rouault's vision of [Ubu's] palace is an abstract one, and it is interesting to note that this accords with Jarry's own intention.[17]

Fig 2. Georges Rouault, *The Palace of Ubu Roi*, 1916, Gouache on paper, 29 1/2 x 22 1/2 inches. Private Collection

Fig. 3. Florence postcard, Rouault's personal collection. Photo courtesy Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris

Thanks to recent discoveries in the Rouault archives, we now know that Soby's characterizations were largely correct: Rouault had in fact collected a good number of postcards with images of towers, including San Francesco del Deserto and San Marco's Campanile in Venice (which had been newly built in 1912 following the collapse of the original tower on July 14, 1902), Renaissance-era towers in Florence, and mosque towers from North African French colonies (**fig. 3**). Numerous examples of these towers can be seen in the present volume, including two plates of the *Miserere* series: *In the old faubourg of Long Suffering* and *My sweet country, where are you?* (**nos. 27k and 27rr**); in one of the copperplate engravings for the *Carnets de Gilbert* (1931, **no. 35a-d**); in several plates of the *Passion*, especially *Christ and the Holy Women; Christ and the Poor*; *Meeting*; *Executioner's assistant (carrying a piece of the cross)* (**nos. 47i, 47j, 47q**); and in the oil painting *Twilight* (1937, **no. 52**). Rouault himself expressed his love for the vertical thrust shooting upward from horizontal landscapes while commenting on watching dancers in the Ballets Russes' "The Prodigal Son" (for which he produced the set designs[18]):

> I saw the whole ballet troupe in movement: friezes, bas-reliefs, facades, compositions inscribed in space. The mind was carried far away from a physical spectacle. The bodies swayed to the cadence of collective rhythmic movements—verticals of high-rising flame or long horizontal rhythms. What joy that was for an artist![19]

In an undated study for *Ubu* in India ink and gouache simply entitled *African Landscape (#1)*, two Africans are situated in an exotic landscape, one reclining female and the other a male standing with arms raised. The male's arms overhead echo the trees' vertical branches, acting as a counterpoint to the horizontal female figure and reinforcing the harmonious relationship between Nature and the couple.

Another early study entitled *Projet pour Ubu colon* (ca. 1917, **no. 20**) introduces a dissonant element into this Edenic world. On the ground lies a naked African with her arm outstretched in an Odalisque pose. Approaching on the horizon is what appears to be an armed policeman or perhaps a soldier with helmet and rifle-bayonet. The

relationship of the intruding colonial to the indigenous African remains ambiguous in this suspended moment—an expression of power? an overt threat? As Jody Blake suggests, iconographic parallels can be drawn with both Honoré Daumier's lithograph *Rue Transnonain, 15 April 1834* (see Schloesser, "1871-1901") as well as a chilling illustration for the fiercely anti-colonialist satirical journal *L'Assiette au beurre* ("Quant à l'ouvrier, s'il est quesquefois ignoble……il est souvent sublime," 21 January 1905) (see Jody Blake essay figures).

Three images produced around 1918 demonstrate the way in which Rouault's *Ubu* typology had taken shape soon after Vollard's commission. This is partly because the work on *Ubu* was an extension of Rouault's grotesques produced between 1902-1918 (compare, for example, *Bureaucrat* [1917, **no. 16**]).[20] A sketch in India ink and color, *Malikoko. Pour Ubu* (ca. 1918), offers a glimpse of a sturdy African, staring straight ahead, whose blackness blends into the dark background. It is a caricatured image (with a neologism for a name) of King Makoko, a Congo leader who ceded his kingdom to the imperialist French Third Republic in 1880.[21] He represents the indigenous African of a bygone era—but as caricatured, he perhaps also represents a dupe who sold his people and heritage to the colonizers. A watercolor and crayon sketch of *Le Père Ubu* (1918) shows a grotesque, large-bellied Ubu in bowler hat (side view) with a smirk under his long, sloping, snout-like nose. He represents the ruthless colonial intruder. *Le Beau Noir (pour Ubu)* ("The Handsome Negro," ca. 1918, **no. 28t**), a snub-nosed black man in top hat with wide eyes and a grin, appears fashionably dressed in Western clothes and pointing upwards. He is a hybrid synthesizing both indigenous and imperialist elements.

In 1925, Vollard published *Les Réincarnations du Père Ubu*, a retrospective collection of his earlier published works: *Le Père Ubu à l'Hôpital* (1917), *Le Père Ubu à l'Aviation* (1918), *La Politique coloniale du Père Ubu* (1919), *Le Père Ubu à la Guerre,* and *Les problèmes coloniaux à la Société des Nations* (1920).[22] (In this 1925 edition, the only visible sign of Rouault's work is a portrait of a stern looking Vollard, with a sharp, bald head, a Lenin look-alike.[23]) The collection opens with Vollard sharing how and where he met Père Ubu. Then Ubu introduces himself as the former King of Poland, now an explorer on leave. The Appendix situates Ubu at the Panthéon in Paris—dedicated to "great men remembered by the fatherland" (*Aux grands hommes, la patrie reconnaissante*)—resting place of such "great men" as Rousseau and Voltaire, where his name will be forever glorified.

1932: Publication of the *Réincarnations*

It was not until 1932, after finally resolving many difficulties Rouault had with the concept of the work and its format, that the deluxe folio edition of Vollard's *Les Réincarnations du Père Ubu* with Rouault's full artwork saw the light of day. In 1933, *Réincarnations* was exhibited for the public at the Galerie Cardo in Paris and the Julien Levy Gallery in New York.

This 1932 deluxe edition, beginning with its snake charmer going about his exotic business on the front cover, offers a striking display of Rouault's art.[24] *Réincarnations* boasted of twenty-two *hors-texte* copper etchings and 104 interior woodcuts illustrating the pages of text completed by Rouault from 1916 to 1928. Technically speaking, Vollard always paid very close attention to the quality of his deluxe publications: the texture of the paper, the nuance of design in the printing process, and above all, the superior quality of the artist's work. This was especially true in the case of *Réincarnations.* However, in a sense Rouault's superior images overwhelmed the text, expressing the character of Ubu more poignantly than Vollard's satirical prose. In a contrast made by François Chapon, Vollard's text emerges poorly:

> [Rouault] soared high above the spirit of these absurd recantations. Their intended drollery hangs in tatters on the powerful frame with which artistic genius had endowed this stale myth. To confirm this one has only to confront the arabesque in white, repeated in black, on the frontispiece and opposite page 62 in the book, with the narrative, which it transcends beyond all

> compare. So vastly superior is Rouault's mental approach that he remains undiminished by the company he finds himself in.[25]

Chapon's analysis of *Réincarnations*[26] offers an opportunity to study the evolution of the engravings for Vollard's text. For example, the first state of the Frontispiece (its later variation is entitled "Incantation") is an etched engraving of a native in prayer before a tree from which female figures emerge. The second state (ca. 1918), much darker and finely detailed, still reflects the presence of two beings in the vegetation. The definitive state, completed in 1928, has a heavily drawn outline of everything shown in the image and shows the lengths to which Rouault went to make the paper absorb as much ink as possible.[27] The two figures in the tree have now become one with the vegetation itself—reflecting a mystical unity, perhaps, indigenous to the pre-imperialist setting.

Rouault's Etchings: Four Categories

Rouault's preface to *Réincarnations* is dated March 1930. The publication sheds much light on several aspects of Rouault's work, especially his anti-bourgeois perspective, as well as his interests in depicting France's colonial policies. As Soo Yun Kang observes, Rouault's antipathy for the bourgeoisie, "unanimously shared by the avant-garde community" during the "Banquet Years" of the Belle Époque (and "continually fed by the diatribes of Léon Bloy"), did not change significantly during the Great War decade.[28] If anything, the war's horrors only solidified his vision. Père Ubu had become for Rouault the archetype of bourgeois power, cruelty, and consequently, absurdity.

In thick, sharp, black strokes, Rouault's twenty-two black and white *hors-texte* etchings for *Réincarnations* dramatically set out his vision. I propose that they can be divided into four overarching categories: (I) indigenous natives and emigrant prostitutes; (II) intruding colonists; (III) hybrids, i.e., natives who wear colonizers' clothing and who internalize colonizers' liberal imperialist ideals; and (IV) surreal unions of opposites.

I. Indigenous Natives and Emigrant Nudes

This series of images reveals flexible black bodies blending naturally into the landscape. These bodies are continuous with those of prostitutes, condemned criminals, homeless wanderers, and circus players (especially acrobats and wrestlers) that Rouault had portrayed since 1902. As Naomi Blumberg suggests, Rouault used these bodies, capable of movement and contortion, to represent his protagonists.[29]

Cover illustration (**no. 28a**): A native plays the flute(s) in order to charm the large serpent emerging from a basket. At first glance, this would seem to be a somewhat standard Orientalist image, playing perhaps on snake charmer representations like that of Jean-Léon Gérôme, *The Snake Charmer*, ca. 1870. However, when set within the context of images that might allude to mysticism and the occult, Rouault might be establishing the African landscape as a non-Western parallel to his beloved Middle Ages, especially as retrieved by the late-nineteenth-century Decadent movement symbolized by Gustave Moreau and Joris-Karl Huysmans.[30]

Title page (**no. 28b**): The central African figure raises his arm overhead in a pose that evokes one of Rouault's favorites: *Être Dempsey* (1927-29, **no. 25**), the pose derived from Michelangelo's *Dying Slave* and Rodin's *The Bronze Age*.[31] (Compare both *Whore with Roux-colored Hair* of 1908 and *Acrobats XIII* of 1913, **nos. 10** and **18**). Additionally, he is flanked on both sides by fellow natives to form a trinity—a device that is not only aesthetically balanced, but also used frequently by Rouault in his representations of clowns. (See, for example, *Parade* [three figures in present exhibition, **nos. 38b, 39, 42**], and *The Wounded Clown,* 1939, **no. 62**).

Frontispiece (**no. 28a**): The African clothed only in white loincloth raises his arm overhead in a pose that echoes Michelangelo and Rodin even more closely than that on the title page. As noted above, the female figures that seem to emerge out of the top of the tree, easily identifiable as such in the first

state of the engraving, are here so dark and without identifying features that they seem intentionally ambiguous. They could be native women; they could be extensions of the tree itself; or they could be something occult, mystical, conjured in prayer. This latter interpretation seems supported by the image's reoccurrence below entitled *L'Incantation*.

Bamboula (**no. 28c**): The grinning African with long, lanky arms extended upwards and extremely muscular legs seems to be dancing and perhaps drugged or in a trance. (Vollard's text refers to the "Bamboula" as "a popular dance from Liberia."[32]) His wide-open eyes seem to pop out of their sockets, calling to mind the equally large eyes of his near-contemporary, *Head of a Clown* (Post-1930, **no. 40**). Within the context of Rouault's iconographic store, however, the figure is highly suggestive: compare its near-contemporary, *The Juggler* (1930, **no. 38c**) which seems to have been modeled on the statue of an Egyptian priestess in prayer (at the Louvre) and *The Juggler* (1934, **no. 45e**). Perhaps more provocatively, the arms outstretched also closely imitate *Jesus will be in agony, even to the end of the world* (1926, **no. 27ii**) and (after 1930, **no. 63**).

Paysage Tropical (**no. 28d**): On a long road through an African village, a silhouetted, thin black figure in loincloth bears a small load on its head—perhaps a water jug?—accompanied by a child all in white. A typical Rouault "tower" with the round dome (although somewhat diminished in height) lies off to the right while starkly outlined vegetation is positioned against a luminous sky. Rouault, following Jacques Callot (e.g., *The Bohemians [Gypsies], The Beggars*, **fig. 4**), Daumier (*Exodus, Emigrants, Fugitives*), and Manet (*Gypsies*), frequently locates his protagonists "on the road."[33] All of the *Cirque de l'Étoile filante* (1936, **nos. 45a-q**) is dedicated to circus players who have no place to call their own. More particularly, compare three plates from the *Miserere—takes refuge in your heart, poor va-nu-pieds* (**no. 27d**); *Are we not forçats?*...(**no. 27e**); *Sometimes it happens that the road is beautiful*...(**no. 27j**); five plates in *Passion* (1939)—*The Vagabond*; *The Old Man Travels On*; *Executioner's Assistant (carrying a piece of the cross)*; *Meeting*; and *Christ and Disciples* (**no. 47l**); and the many representations of *Veronica with the tender veil still passes along the road*...(**no. 27gg, 27hh, 27ss, 27tt, 27fff,**).

Saying that no one since Rembrandt had the capacity to rejuvenate the genre of the "mystical (or mythical or biblical) landscape" as Rouault did, André Suarès urged him to do so. It became one of Rouault's favorite motifs from the 1930s onward (cf. *Paysage Légendaire,* ["Mythical Landscape"] 1936, and *Twilight,* 1937, **nos. 51** and **52**). Once again, the "mystical" migrates to the tropics in Rouault's *Réincarnations*: Rouault's "tropical landscape" is a "mystical" (or at least "mythical") one, a connection that is made most explicit in the *Miserere* plate entitled *In the land of thirst and fear* (**no. 27m**).

Les Noces ("The Wedding"; **no. 28e**): The nude couple, smiling and wide-eyed, share a loving embrace, most at ease in their natural state. If it is true that there are alchemical traces of the "union of opposites" (a principle common to Jarry, Dada, and Breton) in this work, the wedding's union of male and female would seem to indicate that such a transcendence of Western logic can be found in the "natural" state.[34]

Fig. 4. Jacques Callot, *Journeying*, from *Gypsies (Les Bohémiens)*, "Are these not brave envoys, wandering through foreign lands?" ca. 1621, etching, 5 x 9 1/2 in.

Incantation (**no. 28b**): Concluding where we began, this illustration is almost identical to the *Frontispiece* except that deepening of the black throughout and the simplifying of forms brings out the two figures in the tree

Fig. 5. Félicien Rops, *L'Incantation*, 1888, heliogravure, 14 4/5 x 10 in. Collection of Musée provincial Félicien Rops

top who had been lost earlier. The tree has lost its uniqueness and now the vegetative and the human really are inseparable. Moreover, the figure occupying the lower right, whether human, animal, or plant, mirrors the raised arm gesture. In sum, the tree emerges from the earth, two figures seem to emerge from the tree, and the tree is flanked on both sides by figures in the raised arm position. The title *Incantation* calls to mind the illustration by the Decadent Félicien Rops (**fig. 5**) in which a medieval magician, seated at his desk, conjures up an apparition by means of the incantation he reads from the ancient book of occult magic open in front of him. In Rops's engraving, the (female) apparition emerges not out of a tree but out of a broken mirror. Perhaps most importantly, her arm is raised in nearly the identical pose as the African and his mirrored arm. Here too, Rouault's anti-positivist, anti-bourgeois refuge—the medieval, the mystical, the mythical—has migrated to primitive Africa.

In addition to these indigenous figures, there are three emigrant nudes: *Nu, Nu assis*, and *Fille au grand chapeau* (**nos. 28f, 28g**). Like the nude African couple on their wedding night, all three European nude figures embody vulnerability—that which comes with being unclothed, and that which comes with the status inconsistency of white emigrants who are not in charge. If the word *fille* translates as "whore" (as it did in Rouault's earlier period), then this vulnerability is most especially true of the nude wearing the wide-brimmed hat.[35] The *Seated Nude* strongly echoes the *Whore with Roux-colored Hair* (1908, **no. 10**) as well as the figures just discussed with arms overhead (*Frontispiece* and *Incantation,* **nos. 28a, 28b**). There is also something of *Alone in this life of pitfalls and malice* (**no. 27h**) in her seated position. She also evokes the three *Nudes* in profile in this exhibition (**nos. 7a, 26i, 56**). The *Nude*, represented in a full-frontal standing position from her head down to just below her groin, is in a somewhat rare pose for Rouault, one reserved for only his most vulnerable characters. Close analogies all come from the *Miserere*: *The condemned is led away*…(**no. 27v**); *He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth* (**no. 27y**); *Jean-François never sings* alleluia…(**no. 27l**); the Christ figure in *Lord, it is you, I recognize you* (**no. 27ff**); and *We are doomed to die, we ourselves and all that is ours* (**no. 27qq**). All three nudes here provide sharp contrast and counterpoint to the upper bourgeois women noted below.

II. Invading Europeans

Into this indigenous world come the invaders—the liberal imperialists of France's Third Republic. These bourgeois bureaucrats sharply contrast with the native population: ill at ease in this foreign world, Rouault depicts them as aloof, awkward, and unnatural.

Le Père Ubu chantre (**no. 28k**): Père Ubu, bald, pot-bellied, and bespeckled (cf. *Bureaucrat/Man with Spectacles*, 1917, **no. 16**), is represented in the act of singing and appears buffoonish. As Soo Yun Kang notes, this is the only specific illustration of

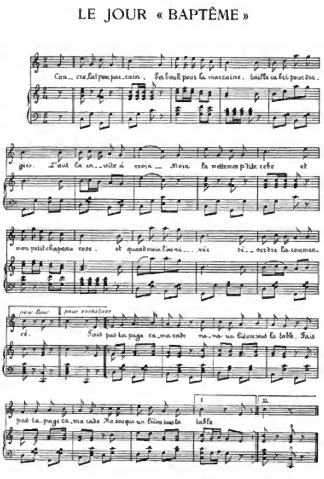



Fig. 6. "The Day of Baptism," one of several full-page musical scores reproduced for Ubu, the singer in *Réincarnations du Père Ubu* (Vollard, 1932).

Ubu in the entire work. In Vollard's text, although Ubu demonstrates several "African songs" standing before the parliament—the songs in full musical notation are included in the text (**fig. 6**)—Rouault's illustration captures him the one time he is briefly referred to as singing in church. "Rather than a pictorial illustration of the narration, this purports to reveal the hypocritical nature of Ubu, who in all vulgarity and shamelessness, considers himself a good believer, as he assumes the dignified pose of a raised hand against his belly. In *Ubu roi* he commits hideous crimes, yet in the moment of danger, he appeals to God for deliverance. The double standard of the bourgeois Ubu is precisely the point of this picture."[36]

L'Administrateur Colonial (**no. 28h**): The bespectacled, full-faced officer with his cone-shaped hat, is "inept to rule, yet loves to exert his power over people in Ubu Roi."[37] Represented in profile with his stiff collar and finger pointed upward, he is a variation on Rouault's iconographical type for his antagonists. The same figure appears in the *Miserere* twice: the first occurrence is "*Believing ourselves kings"* (**no. 27f**), the figure is Ubu Roi himself as delusional (the full diptych reads: *"Are we not all slaves…believing ourselves kings*"); the second occurrence is the depiction of a German imperial officer (who appears elsewhere as the German Kaiser Wilhelm II), "*The more the heart is noble the less the collar is stiff*" (**no. 27ww**). However, the prime archetype for the figure is the large oil painting *Superman* (1916, **no. 19**). Painted in the midst of the Great War, the figure refers to Nietzsche's *Übermensch*, the self-created giant who rises above the herd and its morality, "beyond good and evil"—the triumph of the Will. The colonial administrator is thus one of a type, a dictatorial figure who does as he pleases, echoing Nietzsche's "Overman," the German Emperor Wilhelm, the German imperial officer, and the tyrannical Ubu. Especially given the German references, the colonial administrator is Rouault's devastating commentary on the company kept by French colonialism. The colonial administrator can also be compared with Rouault's *Pédagogue/Kultur* caricature (1912-1913, **no. 15**). The subtitle reads, "Let the little children come unto me," a vicious play on words of Christ. Rouault's more general contempt for academics and critics here refers more particularly to the purveyors of German *Kultur*. Again, the implicit linkage between France's "civilizing mission" and the imperialist German propagation of its *Kultur* is as contemptuous a judgment as an interwar Frenchman could have delivered on his nation's colonial project.

Fléau colon (**no. 28j**): As if the point hadn't already been clearly made by means of iconography, Rouault adds this oversized bulbous figure and gives him the title "*fléau*," a noun that translates as flail, scourge, plague, or pestilence. Curiously, Rouault does not use the adjectival form (as he does in *L'Administrateur colonial*) but rather the nominal (*colon*), which translates as settler, colonizer, or colonist. The title thus reads literally as "Plague Colonist."

Le Politicard (**no. 28i**): This well-dressed politician has a balding head with squinting eyes seated in an oval face, and sports an upturned mustache. He is the unscrupulous type that attempts to advance his status in society. Curiously, this figure

is nearly indistinguishable from *Le Directeur de théâtre* **(no. 28l)**, who appears in the last section of the book, Père Ubu in the country of the Soviets. He is introduced as the "director of our Soviet theaters" (*le directeur de nos théâtres soviétiques*) and he immediately explains his first goal: "to stop the spectators from spitting and vomiting on the benches" (*empêcher les spectateurs de cracher et de vomir sur les banquettes…*").[38]

Given the limited number of plates that Rouault chose to produce, the apparent doubling here must have been extremely intentional, especially as the two images practically serve as bookends (*The Scheming Politician* is inserted opposite page 18; *The Theater Director* is inserted opposite page 172). On the most basic level, Rouault seems to link the scheming politician in the allegedly "democratic" French colony with the theater director in the totalitarian state: they are both about the business of smoke and mirrors. The intention may have been more subtle however, a reference to Jarry's advocacy for a new kind of theater in which characters would be drained of all substance and their heads replaced with masks ("In place of his head the actor will have to substitute the effigy of his character in the form of an enclosing mask…"[39]). In this case, both the politician and the director wear the same mask in this human drama. The differences that separate their locations (in the authoritarian dictatorships of the French colony and the Soviet Union, respectively) are nearly indistinguishable.

Three plates depict bourgeois women: one of them, *Mademoiselle Irma* **(no. 29o)** plays a small role in Vollard's story, the other two—*Les Deux matrones* and *Sainte Nitouche* (The Two Matrons and Saint Never-touch; **nos. 28m** and **28n**) do not. Mademoiselle Irma, almost painfully thin with her long El Greco-style neck, sports a sloping white round hat larger than her face and has a stern look with large, white eye sockets. She seems to be a more heavily re-worked version of *La belle Hélène* (1910-1919, **no. 12**), Rouault's early caricature calling to mind Helen of Troy.[40] As for *Sainte-Nitouche*, the extent to which she has made herself up for sexual appeal—heavy make-up, a necklace, a low-cut bodice, and long-flowing hair—does not seem congruent with her eyes cast down in false modesty. She might be compared to *Hortense* (1902-1914, **no. 13**), which bears the ambiguous inscription, "Virgins and non-virgins."[41] The aura of extreme self-consciousness and self-surveillance of *Mademoiselle Irma* and *Sainte-Nitouche* contrasts sharply with the emigrant nudes discussed above, who, in their extreme vulnerability and transparency, seem fairly well at ease in their surroundings.

In contrast, the middle-aged bodies of the two "matronly women" act in counterpoint to the extreme thinness of both *Mademoiselle Irma* and *Sainte-Nitouche*. (The word "*matrone*" is a pejorative term meaning a "matronly woman" with the connotation of full-figured corpulence.) The upturned nose on the figure closest to the viewer epitomizes Rouault's caricatures of the proud and vain. Her distant ancestry can be found in Daumier's *True, you have lost your case* (See Schloesser "1871-1901") and both Helen and Menelaus in his *Ménélas Vainqueur* (See Schloesser "1871-1901"). Among Rouault's own works, one might look for comparisons with *L'Avantageux/le surhomme* ("The Handsome One/ Superman"; 1912-1913, **no. 14**); figures from the *Miserere*, e.g., *Woman from a chic district believes that she has a reserved seat in Heaven*; *while his lawyer, in hollow phrases proclaims his complete innocence*; *Face to face*; *Auguries*; *The more the heart is noble the less stiff the collar* **(nos. 27t, 27w, 27ll, 27oo, 27ww)**; and *Laquais* ("Lackey"; **no. 46c**) in *Les Fleurs du mal* (1937).

Pierre Courthion comments upon the sharp satirical perspective of Rouault, quoting the painter:

> In the *Réincarnations du Père Ubu* Rouault exposes the stupidity and dishonesty of the very rich. For him, evil "is not so much sordid, loathsome vice," as pharisaical satisfaction. "It is putting up readily with the physical and moral wretchedness of others, and even taking advantage of it, in order to excuse onself.[42]

A third category of Africans that Rouault depicts in his engravings could be called "hybrids," those natives who have been "tainted" by the colonizers' presence in their land. The colonial administrators have been known to extend the policies of the mother country, while exploiting the native population. The "hybrids" eventually succumb to the power of the white colonialists. This category of images is complicated by the fact that Vollard himself could be seen as the prime example of such a hybrid. As Marie Garraut notes, Vollard's critics referred to him as a "*nègre blanc*" ("white Negro") and a "*Bouddha créole*" ("Creole Buddha").[43]

Bon électeur and *Bon candidat Boudoubadabou* (**nos. 28p** and **28q**): in contrast to the slender natives, both the Good Elector and the Good Candidate are squat and round-faced, an indication that they have shared too much in the colonizers' food and way of life. In Vollard's text, Père Ubu is asked by the Parliamentary Colonial Commission (PCCP) how to turn the natives into "good electors."

PÈRE UBU: It is necessary to make good electors [de bonnes électeurs]; and in order to make bad electors vote well, M. Governor will have to have them diligently beaten, even put dynamite cartridges up their asses [dynamite au cul]…

A VOICE: But, Père Ubu, isn't all of this contrary to the prescriptions of the law?…

PÈRE UBU: Yes, of course, but it is necessary, indeed indispensable, in order to teach the bad elector the electoral buzzword. (Shouts from the audience: Very good! Very good!)

A VOICE: But what is this electoral buzzword? (Quick movement of attention.)

PÈRE UBU: It is the manner of voting well, and to vote well, is to vote for the "good candidate" [bon candidat]. (Very good! Very good!)

THE PCCP: Père Ubu, when the good candidate is named, do you have another buzzword to stop the damage of the bad electors?

PÈRE UBU: Certainly we have a buzzword to stop an overrun of votes… After the proclamation of the good candidate we will deliver no more than a single sharp pebble, that is, a single stick of dynamite…

As Jody Blake notes, this exchange seems to refer back to a real incident in 1903 when Georges Toqué and Fernand Gaud made a cautionary example of a Congolese porter "by turning him into a human firecracker."[44]

Rouault's illustration of the "Good Elector" is of a native draped in layers of white clothing and seemingly sporting a tonsure ringing his balding head. His process of voting for the "good candidate" has been initiated by being beaten up and stopped by a single blast. Presumably he has voted for The Good Candidate Boudubadabu, a fellow African looking ill at ease in his white scarf and top hat. The origin of Rouault's neologistic name is a 1913 song by Félix Mayol from Lucien Boyer's words to the music of Albert Valsien: "Bou-dou-ba-da-Bouh!," the prototype of this native soldiers genre.[45] Mayol sings of a very handsome man from Senegal, who entertains on French Independence Day (Quatorze Juillet) and then, desiring to fulfill his duty, joins the army. Heroically, he dies in combat, giving his life for his adopted country.

Profil (**no. 28r**): Given the loose (and sometimes non-existent) associations between Vollard's text and Rouault's illustrations, this woman depicted in profile is difficult to read. However, if she is associated with the text into which her etching is inserted,[46] she would seem to be the type of native who wears Western clothes because she has acquired "reserve" or "prudishness" even as she cannot restrain her flatulence. Père Ubu recalls a

moment when a Negress apologized in advance for her incapacity to restrain herself:

> PÈRE UBU: Suddenly: "Pardon me, my white, me start again my zadultery, me cannot keep in." And from the very depths of her bowels her incontinence expelled a great wind. This is how, M. President of the Society of Nations, we have discovered with the aid of certain external organs called auditory and olfactory organs…
>
> MEMBER: Interrupting—What! Adultery in the colonies is not done by sleeping together?
>
> PÈRE UBU: Continuing—…It is that, in the colonies, the word "adultery" signifies a fart, a Negro fart [un pet de nègre]. (The President of the Society of Nations takes notes.)

The President asks whether the Negroes "resist when we make them abandon the cult of their idols and other black gods?" Ubu, with a subtle allusion to the "Gospel," replies that they "always accept the good news [*la bonne parole*] with gratitude" and that they are contented by being told that in "wench heaven" there are many penises [*dans "le ciel nana beaucoup boutioucs"*[47]]. A voice in the assembly poses a clarifying question:

> A VOICE: And do the converted Negro vixens[48] acquire prudishness [la pudeur] at the same time they acquire the love of the good God and fear of the devil?
>
> PÈRE UBU: Certainly. We know a Negress who, following a rape that left her inexplicably deaf, abjured the faith of her fathers…We know [another] Negress who on Friday, baited her rat traps with cheese, "because," she said, "it be a sin for da rat eats meat the day of the Savior."

By inserting this depiction of the woman in profile within this discussion on the effects of Catholic baptism, Rouault echoes his ambiguous view of institutional religion demonstrated in his depiction of Père Ubu singing in front of the abstract Gothic windows.[49] (It should be noted that "The Day of Baptism" is the first of seven songs or hymns printed with full musical notation.[50]) The woman in *Profile* seems to be linked with *The Good Voter*. Both of them are associated with Vollard's texts that recount the adoption of colonial politics and religion as a result of violence perpetrated on them.

IV. Surreal unions of opposites

Two enigmatic figures seem to be pictorially linked: *Cristal de roche* and *Le Noir Libéré* (**nos. 28s** and **28t**). In the first, "The Liberated Black Man," in stark contrast to the bright sky, an African's deep black skin vividly contrasts with the bright white clothing covering his bottom (more than a loincloth). Wearing a top hat and carrying a suitcase, he runs through an abstract landscape. Both the hat and the suitcase he carries in his right hand link him to the colonizers. If he is now a servant, he has become a disobedient one, linking him to the text into which this etching is inserted: "knowing from experience that the Negro race is very disobedient."[51]

Rouault might also have lifted the title from a passage in which Père Ubu recalls "a Negro-stud who, rendered free by the suppression of slavery, cried out…" Before Ubu can say what the African gigolo cried out, he is interrupted by the President of the Society of Nations, who fills in the blank with French Republican ideology (imitating Créole French): "*Me be a citizen.*" Père Ubu corrects him: "No, the guy shouted out, "*From now on, when me makes love, the price for me the price be doubled.*"[52] The best the "liberated black man" can do is get twice the pittance for his sexual services as he got while enslaved. In short, the title is something of

a cynical fantasy: to be a native in the colonies is precisely to be without the *liberté* of a French *citoyen*. More than mere cynicism, the word pair *noir-libéré* is an oxymoron or, in this context, a union of opposites—the inverse of a *king-enslaved*.[53]

A similar ambiguity surrounds the meaning of *Cristal de roche* **(no. 28s)**, an African woman whose similarly deep black skin vividly contrasts with the bright white, low-cut dress she is wearing. Along with a number of other figures we have seen, she is not a character in Vollard's narrative. Rouault has picked her out of a list of names from "the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms such as: deer, Jerusalem artichoke, rock crystal, poppy, Bengali, watercress."[54] (This example nicely demonstrates how independent and somewhat arbitrary Rouault's "illustrations" of Vollard's text are.) "Rock Crystal" has a long history of association with the occult and with alchemy. It also signifies the union of opposites since ancients believed that rock crystal was formed from a fire so hot it turned into ice.[55] The deliberate pains that Rouault took to make both of these figures' skin as black as possible so that the whiteness of their adopted clothing would be luminous compels the viewer to think of the union of opposites: black-white, fire-ice, free-black.

Le Poisson Volant **(no. 28u)**: "The Flying Fish" is not human but, as suggested in images in the indigenous category, the boundaries between human, animal, and vegetative life in this primitive world are porous. It could be that Rouault wanted to play with the Surrealists: André Breton's companion piece published with the *First Manifesto of Surrealism* in 1924 had been *Poisson Soluble*[56]—literally, "The Water-Soluble Fish"—and this absurdist image of the creature that dissolves within the substance necessary for its existence became a Surrealist favorite. Rouault has taken the "flying fish" from Vollard's text in which it simply refers to Ubu's fishing expeditions and turned it into something extraordinary: not only is it fantastical, but it is itself a union of opposites (air and water). Not surprisingly, it is also found in Jarry's *Pataphysics*.[57]

In sum: Rouault's images seem to capture various possibilities of distinction and mixture between colonizers and colonized. The indigenous are at one with their environment, a world whose "primitive mentality of the mystic" would seem to be an extension of the symbolist, decadent, and occult world of Jarry's *fin-de-siècle*. The imperialist intruders are ill at ease in this world and their iconographical poses are continuous with the caricatures and grotesques that Rouault uses to represent his European antagonists in his earlier work. The hybridized colonists also seem somewhat ill at ease in their Western attire and are in this predicament mostly due to violence. If hybridizations do not work, the unions of opposites offer a vision of a different world in which such dissonant oppositions can be harmonized.

As one reflects on the power of Rouault's stark images of France's bourgeois class and her grandiose attempt at colonization for the sake of prestige, notably in Africa, it is evident that he was truly a social artist, an *artiste engagé*, who held up a mirror to society between the wars. It is not a flattering image of a hypocritical French society that he portrayed, nor a positive view of often weak-minded and mean-spirited French colonials who began to descend upon Africa since the mid-1800s and exploit it mercilessly. Using the hypocritical and pontificating Père Ubu as an archetype of all the negative qualities of his countrymen, Rouault was thus able to provide rich satire with his art in an attempt, as did Alfred Jarry in 1896, to provoke them to understand themselves better.[58]

Endnotes

1 Alfred Jarry, *Ubu Roi*, in *Alfred Jarry. The Ubu Plays*, trans. Cyril Connolly and Simon Watson Taylor (New York: Grove Press, 1968) 21. Jarry's opening salvo "*Merdre!*" is a neologism (the "r" has been added to "*merde*") translated as "Pschitt!" by Connolly and Taylor. Taylor explains: "How is one to duplicate the majestic, tongue-rolling sonority of the word *merdre*, given only our bleak unheroic 'shit' to work on? The aerated hiss of 'pschitt' provides some labial satisfaction, but can only be considered the best of several inadequate alternatives." See Taylor's introduction in Connolly and Taylor 15. Although the Connolly and Taylor translation substitutes "Pa" and "Ma" for "*Mère*" and "*Père*" Ubu, the original French title is preserved here to avoid confusion with Vollard's text below.

2 Soo Yun Kang, *Rouault in Perspective: Contextual and Theoretical Study of His Art* (Lanham, MD: International Scholars Publications, 2000) 154. For Baudelaire's use of Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth as the archetype of the "Ideal" flower of evil, see Kang essay in present volume. For Rouault's illustration of Mère Ubu, see *Georges Rouault, forme, couleur, harmonie,* catalogue published for the Musée d'art moderne et contemporain de Strasbourg exhibition, 10 November 2006 to 18 March 2007, commissariat Fabrice Hergott (Strasbourg: Musées de Strasbourg, 2006) 152.

3 These lines would certainly have had deep resonance for Rouault as they echo the fifty-first Psalm used in the sprinkling rite during the Latin Mass: *Miserere mei, Deus, secundum magnam misericordiam tuam* (Have mercy on me, O God, according to your great mercy.)

4 Maurice Marc LaBelle, *Alfred Jarry: Nihilism and the Theater of the Absurd* (New York: New York Univ. Press) 90.

5 The entire French text among other works by Jarry can be found in Alfred Jarry, *Oeuvres* (Paris: Editions Robert Laffont, 2000) 247-86. Jarry also added *Ubu Cuckolded* and *Ubu in Chains* to the Ubu cycle, then reworked Ubu themes in his *Almanach* published by Ambroise Vollard (1901). Ubu still plays a role in contemporary culture. Out of Jarry's basic material evolved William Kentridge's "Ubu Roi and the Truth Commission" in 1996, based on the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, that tried to create reconciliation between the white and black communities in the wake of Apartheid. Two Eastern European films were adapted from the play: F.A. Brabec's *Král Ubu* (Czech Republic, 1996) and Piotr Szulkin's *Ubu Król* (Poland, 2003). The American avant-garde rock band named Pere Ubu was originally formed in 1975 in Cleveland, Ohio (http://ubuprojex.net/)

6 Alfred Jarry (quoting Catulle Mendès), "Questions de theater," *La Revue blanche* (1897); in *Alfred Jarry. Oeuvres complètes,* 3 vols., ed. Michel Arrivé and Henri Bordillon (Paris: Gallimard, 1988) 1: 491-518; in Kang 154.

7 Keith Beaumont, *Jarry:* Ubu Roi (London: Grant & Cutler, Ltd., 1987) 46.

8 Stephen Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism: Mystic Modernism in Postwar Paris, 1919-1933* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005); quoting Roger Shattuck, *The Banquet Years; the Origins of the Avant Garde in France, 1885 to World War I: Alfred Jarry, Henri Rousseau, Erik Satie [and] Guillaume Apollinaire*, rev. ed. (1958; New York: Vintage Books, 1968) 3-4.

9 See Ambroise Vollard, *Souvenirs d'un marchand de tableaux* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1937). He was considered one of the four eminent promoters of art at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth, along with Paul Durand-Ruel, Alexandre Bernheim, and Georges Petit. Vollard emphasized that he did not only want to be an editor, but also wished to be a writer since he had something to say.

10 *Cezanne to Picasso: Ambroise Vollard, Patron of the Avant-garde*, ed. Rebecca A. Rabinow; with essays by Maryline Assante di Panzillo…[et al.] (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2006). On Vollard's marginality, see Marie Garraut essay in the present volume.

11 Alice L. Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895-1930* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997); Mathew Burrows, "'Mission civilisatrice': French Cultural Policy in the Middle East, 1860-1914," *The Historical Journal* 29/1 (March 1986): 109-135.

12 See Tony Chafer and Amanda Sackur, *Promoting the Colonial Idea: Propaganda and Visions of Empire in France* (New York: Palgrave, 2000).

13 Patricia A. Morton, *Hybrid Modernities: Architecture and Representation at the 1931 Colonial Exposition, Paris* (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 2000).

14 See Jody Blake essay in the present volume; and Blake, "The Truth about the Colonies, 1931: *Art Indigène* in Service of the Revolution," *Oxford Art Journal* 25 (2002): 35-38. See also editors Katharine Conley and Pierre Taminiaux, *Surrealism and its Others*, special number (109) of *Yale French Studies* (June 26, 2006) 27-28. A discussion of the protest by the Communists and the poster "La Vérité sur les colonies" can be found at: http//medlibrary.org/medwiki/French_Communist_Party. Accessed 17 February 2008.

15 Fabrice Hergott, *Rouault* (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1991) 21.

16 For Rouault's illustrations of *The Palace of Ubu Roi* (1916), see James Thrall Soby, *Georges Rouault: Paintings and Prints* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1945) 72, 73.

17 Soby 24. In the original play of *Ubu Roi* in 1896, Jarry specifically stated that none of the stage designs should be cast in a concrete time or place, and Rouault chose to abide by this principle. One design of the palace shows it surrounded by trees drawn in a minimalist style, with a long pathway leading up to its entrance. See Soby 72.

18 For Rouault's set designs for the Ballets Russes' production of *Le Fils Prodigue* (*Prodigal Son*) (premiered May 21, 1929), the last ballet produced by Diaghilev before his unexpected death on August 19, 1929), see Alexander Schouvaloff, *The Art of Ballets Russes. The Serge Lifar Collection of Theater Designs, Costumes, and Paintings at the Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press in Association with the Wadsworth Atheneum, 1997) 300-305.

19 Rouault, "Stella Vespertina" (1947), in François Chapon and Isabelle Rouault, *Rouault: oeuvre gravé*, 2 vols. (Monte-Carlo: Éditions André Sauret, 1978) 2: 49.

20 For these images, see Hergott, *Rouault*: *Le Beau Noir* in India ink (no. 42) and *Le Père Ubu* in watercolors (no. 43). *Le Professeur du Tonneau* (1918, no. 44) looks like a variation on Père Ubu, with his protruding belly and a turned-up nose. *Bureaucrate* (1917) is also reproduced here (no. 45).

21 For this image see Hergott, *Forme, couleur, harmonie* 153, fig. 60. King Makoko signed a treaty in 1880 with the French explorer, Pierre de Brazza, which ceded the Teke kingdom to France, providing France with significant natural resources and cheap labor until 1962.

22 These may be found in Ambroise Vollard, *Tout Ubu colonial et autres textes*, ed. Jean-Paul Morel (Saint-Denis: Musée Léon Dierx; Paris: Séguier, 1994), a 447-page collection of the diverse Ubu material. In addition to the texts listed here, a later Vollard work was *Le Père Ubu au pays des soviets* (Paris: Stock, 1930), recalling Herge's *Les Aventures de Tintin: Reporter du "Petit Vingtième" au Pays des Soviets,* first appearing in January 1929 in the Belgian newspaper *Le Vingtième Siècle.* (I am grateful to my colleague Prof. Claude Cernuschi, who noted this parallel.)

23 Ambroise Vollard, *Les Réincarnations du Père Ubu* (Paris: Le Divan, 1925). Rouault's portrait of the author is placed at the front of the 240-page assembly of Ubu adventures.

24 I am grateful to the Boston Public Library for allowing me to consult their copy of Vollard's *Réincarnations*, the same (No. 264 of 350) being shown in the current exhibition. The original folio consisting of 194 pages captures nuances in Rouault's art that are not visible in any reproduction.

25 Chapon and Rouault, *Œuvre gravé* 1:63.

26 Chapon and Rouault, *Œuvre gravé* 1:124-91

27 Chapon and Rouault, *Œuvre gravé* 1:127-29. See also "Incantation" on 1:150-51. For Rouault's printmaking processes, see essay by John McCoy in present volume.

28 Kang 135.

29 See Naomi Blumberg essay in present volume.

30 For these parallels, see Stephen Schloesser, "1921-1929," in present volume

31 See Blumberg essay in present volume.

32 *Réincarnations* 18.

33 See Roberto Goizueta essay in present volume.

34 For "identity of opposites" in *Réincarnations*, see Schloesser, "1921-1929," in present volume.

35 For Rouault's sensitivity to the prostitute in bourgeois society, see essays by Susan Michalczyk and Mary Louise Roberts in present volume.

36 Kang 149, 150.

37 Kang 150.

38 *Réincarnations* 173.

39 Alfred Jarry, "De l'inutilité du théâtre au théâtre," *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Gallimard, Éditions de la Pléiade, 1972) 407. For context, see Marie Garraut essay in the present volume.

40 For this caricature, see Schloesser, "1902-1920," in the present volume.

41 For this inscription, see Schloesser, "1902-1920," in present volume.

42 Pierre Courthion, *Georges Rouault* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1962) 188.

43 See Marie Garraut essay in present volume.

44 See Jody Blake essay in present volume.

45 Jean-Paul Morel "Ambroise Vollard/Georges Rouault: deux 'solitaires égarés dans la jungle,'" *Georges Rouault, forme, couleur, harmonie* 141-46, see p. 144. For analysis, see http://www.africultures.com/index.asp?menu=revue_affiche_article&no=1217. Accessed 25 April 2008.

46 *Profil* is inserted between pages 40-41 of *Réincarnations* (1932).

47 *Réincarnations* 40. Vollard uses the word "boutioucs" and links it to a notation at the bottom of the page: "Used in *caraïbe* [Caribbean/West Indian] to denote the sexual organ of the Negro males."

48 *les nègres femelles*: "femelle" is an adjective used to modify female animals.

49 For the Catholic anti-colonialism that Rouault would have read in Léon Bloy and Charles Péguy see Blake essay in present volume.

50 These songs or hymns are found in *Réincarnations* 75-81.

51 *Réincarnations* 45. *Le noir libéré* is inserted opposite the following page, 46.

52 Literally: "Maintenant, quand moin faire l'amour, pour moin tous les gros quatre sous…" To this Vollard appends the explanatory note: "Un 'gros quatre sous' se dit de la pièce de 10 centimes par opposition à la pièce de 5 centimes 'petit quatre sous.'" *Réincarnations* 64.

53 On Rouault's use of Jarry's *Ubu enchainé* (King Ubu-enchained) see Schloesser, "Notes on the *Miserere* Plates," in present volume.

54 *Réincarnations* 86. Vollard associates this list with the names given to children during the French Revolution—i.e., "natural" names given to avoid those derived from antiquity or Christianity. See Schloesser essay in present volume.

55 See Schloesser, "1921-1929," in present volume.

56 André Breton, *Manifeste du surréalisme. Poisson soluble* (Paris: Éditions du Sagittaire, 1924).

57 See Schloesser essay in present volume.

58 I am grateful to my colleague Stephen Schloesser, SJ, for his insights into various interpretations of Rouault's colonial themes, as well as to my research assistant Christopher Demaras for his help in the preparation of this chapter.

The Mystery of Rouault's *Réincarnations*: A Sixteen-Year Obsession[1]

Marie Garraut

Could anybody other than Georges Rouault have given Vollard's text, *Réincarnations du Père Ubu,* more impressive or appropriate illustrations—twenty-two etchings and one hundred and four woodcuts? The role that the prints for this book played in Rouault's career and life, and the time he spent on them are so extensive that we must wonder why he would have devoted himself so faithfully to this subject. Why did he spend sixteen years on a project that was not his own? Why did he spend so much time in the company of the ridiculous and despicable Ubu? To understand the meaning of such relentlessness, attention has to be paid to the origins of the text itself, as well as to the origins of the character, Ubu, created by Jarry. What link could there be among people as different as Alfred Jarry, Vollard, and Rouault?

I. Ubu Roi: Symbolist Grotesquerie

Ubu was born in the 1870s from a caricature of a physics teacher in a high school in Rennes (Brittany) named Monsieur Hébert. His students, one of whom was Alfred Jarry, used to make fun of him. Jarry was only fifteen when he wrote *Ubu-Roi*, a play wholly in keeping with the school stories about Monsieur Hébert. It is thus somewhat appropriate to describe it as a high-octane adolescent play: "*Ubu-Roi,* frightening masterpiece, strange phenomenon of our literature (…) Jarry looks like a farcical but serious teenager, who takes on the adult world, its silliness and its nastiness with ferocity and humor."[2] *Ubu-Roi* is as serious as all works dealing with the depth and darkness of human nature.

Ubu-Roi, a five-act play in prose, landed like a meteorite on the audiences who saw it first performed in 1888 by the company "Les Marionnettes" and then again in 1896 by the troupe of Lugné-Poe in the soon-to-be famous "Théâtre de l'Oeuvre." As ridiculousness morphed into nonsense, Jarry's incredible strength and insight became clearly apparent. From then on, it was impossible to say Jarry's name without thinking "Ubu" as the creature surpassed its creator. This literary UFO, not particularly well received in its early productions, is nowadays unanimously considered a masterpiece, a cornerstone in the history of French literature. More than the author or even the play itself, it is the main character, Ubu, whose name is unforgettable. This proper noun has become a common noun, as well as an adjective—a character, a thing, or even a situation might be "*ubuesque.*" The highest honor for Ubu is that the adjective exists in different languages.

Père Ubu, an amply corpulent man egged on by his wife, is as despicable as he is ridiculous. However, contrary to the French proverb —"Le ridicule ne tue pas" (Ridicule does not kill)—Ubu's ridiculousness does indeed kill, murdering anyone who gets in the way of his ambitions. (Did Rouault himself not say: "Chacun travaille à se faire roi." [Everyone works to become king.]?) The audience laughs nervously and with apprehension. Beneath his jolly exterior of fat, accumulated at the expense of others, Père Ubu terrifies.

Jarry seems to have opened Symbolist theater up to a radically new theater. Inspired by northern European authors such as Henrik Ibsen and August Strindberg, whose plays Jarry viewed at the Théâtre de l'Oeuvre (where his own would soon appear), and which he attended, Jarry's *Ubu* became "in a sense the most influential avant-gardist play of all."[3] Although *Ubu-Roi* does not fit definitions of symbolist theater that entail striving for a meditative experience and setting aside any comic genre,[4] it may still be considered a symbolist work especially because of the innovations of its *mise en scène*. Following Jarry's explicit stage directions, the actors at the Théâtre de l'Oeuvre premiere wore masks (the Ubu actor had a cardboard pear-shaped mask) and imitated puppets on a minimalist set.[5]

Jarry's manifesto entitled "De l'inutilité du théâtre au théâtre" ("On the Futility of the Theatrical in the Theater") explains his theatrical aesthetic. Although most critics (and even symbolist sympathizers) could hardly appreciate Jarry's work, some did interpret *Ubu-Roi* as a symbolist play, either comic or dramatic. The poet and critic Arthur Symons considered *Ubu* a "symbolist buffoonery."[6] Stéphane Mallarmé, perhaps the most important symbolist theorist, considered *Ubu-Roi* a perfect symbolist drama: "you have made this [character] a spare and steady dramatic sculpture. He enters into the domain of the highest taste and haunts me."[7]

II. From Symbolism to Surrealism

In French literature, Jarry is often considered to have prepared the way for the "théâtre de l'absurde." Jarry, precursor of Ionesco? In 1928, as production for the Rouault-Vollard *Réincarnations du Père Ubu* was moving into high pitch for its 1932 publication, Jarry's protectress, Rachilde,[8] called him the originator of the avant-garde—the precursor of Futurism, Cubism, Dadaism, and Surrealism.[9] Jarry's *l'imaginaire du langage* (inventiveness in language), black humor, and absurdity as a response to an absurd world are all tools used later on by well-known Surrealists such as André Breton and Pierre Reverdy.

Plays on words (and hence unconscious associations) are obvious as soon as *Ubu-Roi* opens with its unforgettable first word: "Merdre"— a neologism created by adding a second "r" to "merde" ("shit") which the French throat can aspirate for as long as it has air.[10] Many other neologisms run throughout the work, including the "highly suggestive oaths (*merdre*, *cornegidouille, cornephynance*), insults (*bouffresque, salopin, bourrique*) and anatomical references (*bouzine, bigorgne, oneilles*)."[11] The creation of the name "Ubu" was in service of musicality and humor. The written form itself—the potbellied "U"—is the belly Jarry himself drew and adorned with his own text.

Second, *Ubu-Roi*, tinged with tragic irony, is shot throughout with black humor, a singular characteristic of surrealist works.[12] Jarry said that comedy should be macabre, like a medieval *danse macabre* (dance of the dead).[13] Serial killings provoke bitter laughter both in Ubu's characters as well as in the audience. The timelessness of Jarry's work suggests that the horror of human existence crosses epochs and centuries.

Finally, the use of absurdity as a response to observation of the world positions Jarry as a prescient precursor of the post-World War I age. Strindberg pioneered the use of puppets to embody this absurdity, and Jarry followed his lead. In his essay "On the Futility of the Theatrical in the Theatre" (noted above), Jarry dismissed both stage sets and actors as being useless for theater and called instead for character masks: "L'acteur

devra substituer à sa tête, au moyen d'un masque l'enfermant, l'effigie du personnage…" (In place of his head the actor will have to substitute the effigy of his character in the form of an enclosing mask…").[14]

But is this absurdity as a response an aim in and of itself? Can absurdity combat absurdity; can evil conquer evil? Interestingly, Vollard seems to have believed in this possibility when he used Ubu-esque absurdism in newly absurd contexts—first, in the First World War, and then in French colonialism.

III. From Ubu to Ubu: Ambroise Vollard's Ambition

Ambroise Vollard cherished a literary ambition throughout his entire life. He was passionate, not only about publishing wonderfully illustrated books,[15] but also about writing, as he explicitly confessed in his autobiography: "Not satisfied with being a publisher, I tried my hand at writing as well."[16] Inspired by Giorgio Vasari's biographies of Renaissance painters, Vollard too wrote about the lives of painters whose works he collected, including Cézanne (1914), Renoir (1920), and Degas (1924).[17]

The *Almanach illustré du Père Ubu* (1901) was the one and only collaboration between Vollard and Jarry (who died in 1907 at the age of 34). They probably met each other in Vollard's cellar, where dinners for artists and writers were regularly held. François Cheval writes:

> A small circle around Jarry formed in Vollard's cellar. Maurice Denis, Pierre Bonnard, Claude Terrasse, Fagus (alias Georges Fayet, formerly an anarchistic poet) became the art dealer's regulars. Together they developed a taste for paradox and absurdity. Artists and writers gave free expression to their iconoclastic fury. Faced with difficulties in finding a publisher for the Almanach, Vollard took the task upon himself.[18]

Vollard's recollections stress the colonialist aspect of the 1901 *Almanach*:

> In the Cellar meetings […] was born the idea of an Almanach du Père Ubu. The new Almanach had to be, first of all, exclusively colonial. The idea came to Jarry when he listened to me telling Negro stories of my country…[…]. We also wanted very much to fill a deplorable gap concerning the "colonial thing." In other words, the previous almanachs didn't mention anything about what was happening in our colonies. In fact, my native island provided me with ample and colorful subject matter.[19]

Apollinaire provided an account in the *Mercure de France*[20] as did Vollard himself, who wrote in his memoirs: "Alfred Jarry! There was never a nobler figure in the world of letters."[21]

After Jarry's premature death, Vollard seems to have realized that he needed Ubu. He negotiated with Jarry's heirs and the publisher Fasquelle and purchased the copyright. Thus from 1916 to 1932 the adventures of Ubu continued, now flowing from the pen of Vollard: *Le Père Ubu à lHôpital* (1917), *Le Père Ubu à l'Aviation* (1918), *La Politique coloniale du Père Ubu* (1919), *Le Père Ubu à la Guerre* and *Les problèmes coloniaux à la Société des Nations* (1920), *Le Père Ubu au pays des Soviets* (1930). These episodes were later combined to form the *Réincarnations du Père Ubu* illustrated by Rouault and published in a deluxe edition. No less than sixteen years were needed before the work finally appeared in 1932.

IV. Ambroise Vollard: Nobody but Ubu

Why did Vollard choose Ubu? The answer is not self-evident. To choose a character already well-known in literature could be perceived as a legitimate authorial strategy, an easy option for an inexperienced writer entering the literary community. It would be in his best interest to use a figure familiar to readers and approved by literary society. When Vollard started writing, Jarry's

Ubu was almost as famous a character in France as Rabelais's *Pantagruel* or the Italian *Pulcinella* from the *Commedia dell'Arte*. In the four decades between the first performance of *Ubu-Roi* (1888) and the publication of *Réincarnations* (1932), the character had become canonical. Did Vollard adopt this figure cynically, to take advantage of Ubu's fame? Perhaps. But this was not the main reason for his choice.

Why nobody but Ubu? In Vollard's mind, Ubu deserved his all-encompassing commitment. He invested money in this project, as well as his own being, giving Ubu the resources of Vollard's own native Creole language. Did Vollard feel kinship with Ubu? Did he recognize himself in the fictitious king? The idea seems preposterous when imagining Ubu, vicious and grotesque, next to the well-respected Vollard whose portraits characterize him as the opposite.

Can a physiognomic parallel be drawn between Ubu, the fictitious usurper, and Vollard? His critics, employing racist clichés, gave less-than-flattering observations on his particular physical appearance: Vollard was seen as a "*Papou*" ("Papuan"), a "*Boudha créole*" ("Creole Buddha"), and a hybrid "*nègre blanc*" ("white Negro"). Eight years after Vollard's untimely death, Georges Bresson described his head in Ubu-esque terms: "It made one think of those strangely formed potatoes with craters and protuberances that some Noailles found similar to the human face or the hairless rump(s) of apes or baboons.[22]

Vollard was also assumed to have had (and was criticized for) an excessive inclination for sexual pleasure. This provides a context for this recollection of Pierre Daix (in 1994): "Vollard laughed from his bald head to his paunch, and he tapped himself on his thighs […]. On such [sexual] topics, Vollard couldn't stop, with his voice singing of the islands, his Creole lisping, his laugh and his slaps on his thighs.[23] In the *Réincarnations*, Vollard greatly expanded Ubu's lascivious nature. Did Vollard identify with the character's concupiscence?

In addition to posture we might consider imposture: namely, the actual imposture of the puppet character Ubu crowned king. The *arriviste* Vollard was considered something of an impostor: a colonist who emigrated to the capital of metropolitan France, disliked and denounced by his competitors. To start from nothing and acquire absolutist power—that is Ubu's ambition. Was it also that of Vollard, the Creole who became the most famous and powerful Parisian art dealer? Would the conquest of the world be an ambition shared by the creator and his creature?

Vollard reveals remarkable lucidity and self-mockery in his texts. This self-mockery attests to his sense of humor related in so many accounts. This Creole humor, amplified in the colonized context, verging on absurdity, found great potential in Ubu the puppet. Ubu's modernity made him preferable to any *Pantagruel* or *Pulcinella*. Finally, Ubu had an advantage: as former king of Poland (a country that did not exist in the 1880s), he was the perfect medium for political criticism.

To return to our initial proposition: Vollard's choice could have been perceived as an easy option, the clever strategy of a well-known art dealer but inexperienced writer. Upon reflection, however, it appears to have been a challenge. To give life once again to a lascivious and ludicrous character, to write a first book, and to sharply criticize both French politics and society were the challenges Vollard faced—challenges not to be taken lightly. In the final analysis, Vollard had the necessary sense of humor—of which he was quite proud—to voice his views satirically through the character of Ubu. For him, this was a personally important endeavor of extreme seriousness.

V. Jarry and Vollard: Comparable Ambitions?

What did Vollard do with Jarry's character? Should there be the question of lineage? Vollard both used Ubu's name and denied copying Jarry's Ubu. Considering himself an adoptive father, Vollard created expressly political ambitions for his adopted son.

> I borrowed from Jarry this name of "Ubu," but just to have a name for a character who could never hope to have such symbolic value. By reincarnating him, I never aimed

> at satire so general that it would end up being somewhat abstract. On the contrary, I always understand and keep Ubu strictly concrete. [I do this] in such a way that all of human vileness is no longer incarnated in an artificial character; it is more modestly the most glaring failings, defects, vices of a given milieu: the world of politicians [...]. My Ubu is rather the expression of collective thoughtlessness and tyranny. [...].[24]

By claiming his originality, Vollard suggests an essential difference between Jarry's work and his *Réincarnations du Père Ubu*. Indeed, by setting the abstract (*l'abstrait*) over and against the concrete (*le concret*), he interprets the satire in Jarry's work as general and his own assaults as *ad hominem*. He identifies his targets without any ambiguity: *"les politiciens"* (politicians), a French word already evoking negative connotations. Here is an occasion for us to discover an unknown side of Vollard. He, the official art dealer, recognized and *"bien en vue"* (very much in the public eye), seems to want to settle his differences with this *"milieu déterminé"* (specific group) he talks about.

But what are his grievances? The answer is found in his geographical origins. Creole, he was born on the Bourbon island of *l'île de la Réunion,* a French territory, the "little homeland" where Ubu's adventures take place. The people who reproached him for his origins—which rang a sour note in Paris society—were probably the same people who defended and sustained the colonial system. In brief: Vollard's targets are politicians and colonizers during this high-water mark of the French Empire. The author is the echo of, or more precisely, the spokesperson for, the sworn opponents of "colonial deception." François Cheval offers this alternative Creole genealogy:

> Wholly in keeping with his famous Creole precursors, le chevalier de Parny and Leconte de Lisle,Vollard treats the French colonial practices in a bitter, disillusioned, dramatic, dark and disturbing tone. He mercilessly decries the ravages of "colonial deception." Long before Aimé Césaire, Michel Leiris, Frantz Fanon, he describes the assimilationist methods in all their absurdity. The "ubuesque" epic becomes pathos.[25]

It goes without saying, the imperialist strategies of France's Third Republic and the ensuing years of war provided much *"ubuesque"* material!

VI. From Jarry to Surrealism via Vollard

Can the *Réincarnations du Père Ubu*—which is not even mentioned in dictionaries of French literature—be described as a surrealistic work in the same way as *Ubu-Roi*? Has Vollard used surrealistic elements latent in Jarry's play that would be developed into a theory by Breton in 1924?[26] Let us consider three elements: inventiveness in language, black humor, and absurdity.

First, language plays a big part in the work of Vollard, whose native language was Creole. In fact, Vollard's primary contribution to Jarry's *Almanach illustré* (1901) was his bringing his Creole language resources, which Jarry did not know. Vollard enjoyed playing with the language of his childhood and in these works he discovered a means of giving free expression to his imagination. Twenty years later, *Les problèmes coloniaux à la Société des Nations* (1920) would sound exotic to readers in metropolitan France, perhaps as exotic as Jarry's language itself.

All puns aside, the *Réincarnations* is also tinged with black humor. Less dark and macabre than the humor of Jarry's plays, Vollard's Creole humor is noticeably different—more relaxed and less disturbing. The *"fin de siècle,"* which left its decadent mark on Jarry's play, may have been somewhat foreign to Vollard. Furthermore, the "abstract" intentions of *Ubu-Roi* makes its pessimism about human nature more widespread than the more "concrete" political satire of *Réincarnations*.

Absurdity seems to have been for Vollard Jarry's most seductive lure. In the *Manifeste du Surréalisme* (1924), Breton laid out his theory of the irony of opposites, an aspect of absurdity found in

Jarry's work as well in that of Vollard. Ubu exemplifies the unity of opposites in himself: king yet chained, all-powerful yet fearful (and therefore not in control). Vollard loved the nonsensical aspect that gives satire such a wide range of possibilities. This is the strongest legacy linking Jarry's Ubu with Vollard's.

Writing brought the art dealer a great freedom, a kind of creativity he could not find in his other activities. Ubu became a very useful medium—one might even say a puppet or a mask—for both his attempt to become known as a literary figure as well as his apparent desire to "work through" his colonialist origins. But this demanded an illustrator equal to the task. Considering Vollard's ego, who could possibly illustrate such an intensely personal work? Who is equal to the task of illustrating such satire?

VII. The Choice of Rouault and Rouault's Choice

Once upon a time, Georges Rouault met Ambroise Vollard…

Business brought them together for the first time in July 1907, when Vollard contacted the painter from whom he wanted to buy some ceramics. The offer, however, was not without an ulterior motive. The dealer proposed an unwritten agreement that would give him exclusive rights to Rouault's works. The artist declined in order to preserve his freedom and avoid such enchainment. However, in 1913, material necessities forced Rouault to accept. In 1916, Vollard proposed a more specific exchange: he would publish Rouault's labor of love, the proposed two-volume *Miserere et Guerre*, if Rouault would illustrate Vollard's own extremely personal project, *Réincarnations*. Assured that he would be spared a precarious existence, Rouault began his Herculean task, devoting the next sixteen years of his life to it, years of a mysterious ferocity. Except for Jean Puy, from whom a few plates were ordered, Rouault carried out this task alone. As the French say, "*Chacun sa croix*" (To each one a cross).

Why was Vollard so insistent that Rouault be the illustrator? For the *Almanach illustré* (1901) published for Jarry, he had chosen Pierre Bonnard. Why did he not call on him to illustrate his new project? It might have been due to the difference in content. Rouault's friend, André Suarès, opined that no one else could illustrate this text: "Rouault was the painter this hero needed. Rouault is the master of the hellish caricature (*la caricature infernale*). His drawing and his thinking are reminiscent of the Agony of the Cross in the early Middle Ages. (…) Rouault's pity is fierce." [27]

Somewhat paradoxically, perhaps only a "religious artist" could capture the caricaturist strength of human nature hidden in *Réincarnations*. Whether Christ, clowns, whores, or Ubus, Rouault's subjects are never without deep meaning. The human tragedy plays itself out behind all these different masks.

VIII. "Reincarnations": Rouault and the Mystery of Incarnation(s)

The idea for the title finally adopted was Rouault's. With that in mind, the audience should look at it more closely. It now takes on a very different sound. We cannot imagine that Rouault, the Catholic believer, chose this word without thinking of its highly religious meaning.

Ubu's reincarnation is most obviously a literary reincarnation, and the many episodes justify the use of plural "*réincarnations*." Less obviously, the idea of bodily flesh is implicit in the Latin stem (*carn*-from *carnis*, flesh) and its French derivation (*charnel*=physical, bodily, carnal). Ubu is above all a body, obsessed by bodily passions and always at the mercy of sensual appetites. Heaviness is inscribed in his name, "Ubu." (Perhaps not insignificantly, it is a near-homonym for "Obu" [bombshell], the childhood nickname given to Rouault since he was born in a cellar during a bombardment.)

What about the religious, the Christian resonance, all the more apparent due to another interesting word in the title—"*Père*" (Father)? (The capital letter is suggestive.) Reincarnation is defined as a "phenomenon by which the soul, after physical death, embodies itself again in a new human body (or successively in several), so as

to continue its spiritual evolution."[28] (The French language uses the same word to say "embody" or "incarnate"). This succinct definition consists of two essential ideas—material embodiment and spiritual evolution—reminding us that incarnation is not a mere repetitive phenomenon without purpose. In view of this definition, *Réincarnations du Père Ubu* sounds highly ironical. Ubu's reincarnation is paradoxical, insofar as there is no sign of spiritual evolution of this character, wherever or whenever he (re)appears.

Does this mean that the artist who invented the title was expressing deep pessimism? Questioning humanity and its direction is always on Rouault's mind and present in his work. Rouault's questions about humanity are both Pascalian and personal. Additionally, a central tenet of Catholicism is the mystery of Incarnation. God became human, assuming bodily flesh in Jesus Christ in order to save humanity. The irony grows darker if Ubu is the one who is reincarnated, the second to be incarnated after Christ the Son. Then the epithet "*Père*" (Father), given to Ubu, is almost blasphemous. So, can Rouault's relentless passion in depicting Ubu be a way to paint *a contrario* Christ? Ubu Antichrist? This hypothesis, initially suspect, becomes more compelling when we remember that Jarry's first version of Ubu was entitled *César Antéchrist* (Cesar [Emperor] Antichrist).

Rouault brought to Ubu his genius for caricatures and grotesques. He was a worthy descendant of Daumier, possessing the same tragi-comical inspiration. Apollinaire said that his drawings were unbelievable, full of pity and irony, merging the comical sublime and the tragic sublime.[29] Whoever the characters might be—metropolitan magistrates, colonial administrators, usurping Ubus—they all bear heavy the yoke of self-deception, and they are dangerous to the rest of humanity, especially when they have semi-divine (or semi-demonic) power over life and death.

During this time Rouault was sadly misunderstood by his friend Suarès. The painter's mysterious obsession with this carefully ordered work was not entirely due to Vollard's insistent demands, but rather finds its explanation in the meaning of the word "*réincarnations*" itself. Creating Ubu's colonial scenes while simultaneously painting Christ's faces and Veronica's veils, Rouault saw in Ubu the "Antichrist" in the literal sense—all that goes against the story of Jesus Christ. The engravings Vollard ordered to satirize imperialist exploitations of the colonized found their ideal artisan in Rouault, born in a cellar during governmental bombardments of his working-class Belleville. "Obu" was perfectly suited to illustrate "Ubu."

Yet one final question remains: how might we reconcile the surrealist content of Vollard's text and Rouault's religious concerns?[30] Let us remember that the Surrealists claimed to be not only anticlerical but also anti-theological. Even if the word "surrealist" does not apply in any simple way to Rouault's work, it is possible to find some link between Ubu's illustrator and the surrealist writers. First of all, Rouault possesses a great sense of caricature and the grotesque in terms of absurdity. In that respect, Rouault might be closer to Jarry than to Vollard. Is there any comparison between Rouault's *Le Surhomme* (**no. 19**) and Jarry's *Le Surmâle*? There may be some connection between Rouault's religious feeling—with "mystical" roots in symbolism, decadence, and some occultism—and the magic forces that surrealists suppose are managing the world. There may be a link between their ways of comprehending reality.

IX. Reception of the Meteorite

Despite a regrettable lack of sources, we cannot ignore the question of how the work, *Réincarnations du Père Ubu,* was received when it appeared in France in the 1930s. We will limit ourselves to making conjectures by trying to put the question into its literary, historical, and political context. Did the luxury edition of the book, which came out in 1932, find an audience, and was that audience the one for which it was initially intended?

Answering this question becomes more difficult when we think of the strangeness of the work. The word "*grotesque*" takes on a whole new meaning.[31] Ambivalence becomes the key word—a mixture of texts by an inexperienced writer and illustrations by an engraver who was at the time

better known as a painter; an extremely wealthy art dealer renowned for his licentious and nearly nonsensical humor, and a Catholic artist who was working simultaneously on his chef-d'oeuvre, the *Miserere*. Additionally, how might this ambivalent work be received by a deeply divided audience: on the one hand, shaped by the racial anthropology expressed in the 1931 International Colonial Exhibition, on the other hand, shaped by the counter-exhibition *La Vérité sur les Colonies* (The Truth About the Colonies) in which the surrealists were deeply involved?[32] We cannot answer these questions without further research, but the act of framing them in these opposing terms suggests that the reception of *Réincarnations* was going to be rough going from the outset.

Vollard's text has never appeared in dictionaries or encyclopedias listing the main works of French literature. Vollard was never considered a literary artist and this was perhaps his greatest disappointment. By contrast, the quality of Rouault's illustrations is undisputable, despite the fact that he never seems to have been totally satisfied, starting them over and over again. Happily, the demanding Vollard seems to have been satisfied. We thank him for having guessed what a powerful caricaturist Rouault actually was.

Conclusion

Réincarnations du Père Ubu is a hybrid work: a collaboration between an author-publisher, passionate but demanding, and an eternally unsatisfied painter-engraver, consumed at the same time with his life's major task, *Miserere.* In the words of Suarès: "The understanding between Rouault and Vollard is of a rich and fertile vigor. The text of Ubu is in this way raised to a kind of a farcical and mocking tragedy."[33] Vollard, though insistent, generously allowed his illustrator great freedom; he was repaid with interest when the strength of Rouault's illustrations elevated his text to another plane.[34]

Rouault's *Réincarnations* demonstrate his talent as a true caricaturist in the lineage of Daumier, where triviality is only illusory, merely a mask concealing anxious depths. Perhaps most importantly, however, is this unexpected realization: in spite of the radical differences between the two works, the *Réincarnations* illustrations have the same deep meaning as those in the *Miserere*. This is what solves the mystery of Rouault's *Réincarnations*—a sixteen-year obsession.

Endnotes

1 I am deeply grateful for assistance in translation and editing provided by Thomas Epstein and Mary Robinson Kalista.

2 Laffont-Bompiani, *Dictionnaire des oeuvres,* vol. 4 (Paris: Société d'édition de dictionnaires et encyclopédies, 1953) 644.

3 John A. Henderson, *The First Avant-Garde, 1887-1894* (G.G. Harrap, London, 1971) 126; qtd. in Frantisek Deak, *Symbolist Theater, The Formation of an Avant-Garde* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993) 227.

4 Deak 237-238.

5 "Jarry's set was a combination of symbolist synthetic design and what was believed by some critics to be a principle of Elizabethan theater: the use of written signs. The result of this alliance was quite unusual." Deak 231.

6 Arthur Symons, *Studies in Seven Arts* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1906) 372.

7 Stéphane Mallarmé, *Propos sur la Poésie* (Monaco,: Éditions du Rocher, 1959) 159.

8 Rachilde was the *nom de plume* of Marguerite Vallette-Eymery (1860-1953). See Diana Holmes, *Rachilde: Decadence, Gender and the Woman Writer* (New York: Berg, 2001).

9 Rachilde, *Alfred Jarry ou le Surmâle de lettres* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1928).

10 Jarry's opening salvo "Merdre!" is translated as "Pschitt!" by Cyril Connolly and Simon Watson Taylor. Taylor explains: "How is one to duplicate the majestic, tongue-rolling sonority of the word *merdre*, given only our bleak unheroic 'shit' to work on? The aerated hiss of 'pschitt' provides some labial satisfaction, but can only be considered the best of several inadequate alternatives." See Taylor's introduction in Connolly and Taylor, *Alfred Jarry. The Ubu Plays* (New York: Grove Press, 1968) 15.

11 Connolly and Taylor 15.

12 In 1937, André Breton gave lectures at the Exposition Internationale on black humor published as Breton, *De l'humour noir* (Paris: GLM, 1937); expanded and published under the German occupation as Breton, *Anthologie de l'humour noir* (Paris, Éditions du Sagittaire (impr. A. Rey), 1940).

13 Alfred Jarry writing in *La Revue Blanche* (1 January 1897), *Tout Ubu: Ubu Roi, Ubu cocu, Ubu enchaîné, Almanach du Père Ubu, Ubu sur la Butte, avec leurs prolégomènes et paralipomènes*, ed. Maurice Saillet (Paris: Brodard et Taupin, Livre de poche, 1962) 153.

14 Alfred Jarry, "De l'inutilité du théâtre au théâtre," *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Gallimard, Éditions de la Pléiade, 1972) 407.

15 See for example: Paul Verlaine, *Parallèlement*, illustrated by Pierre Bonnard (Paris: A. Vollard, 1900).

16 Ambroise Vollard, *Recollections of a picture dealer* (New York: Hacker Art Books, 1978) 263.

17 Ambroise Vollard, *Paul Cézanne* (Paris: Galerie A. Vollard, 1914); Vollard, *Auguste Renoir (1841-1919)* (Paris: G. Crès et Cie, 1920); Vollard, *Degas: (1834-1917)* (Paris: Les Éditions G. Crés et Cie., 1924).

18 François Cheval, "Un Créole à 'compte d'auteur," *Tout Ubu colonial et autres textes,* Ambroise Vollard and Jean-Paul Morel (Saint-Denis: Musée Léon Dierx; Paris: Séguier, 1994) 16.

19 Ambroise Vollard, *Souvenirs d'un marchand de tableaux*, qtd in Cheval, 16.

20 "Among the guests of these underground love fests [*ces agapes souterraines*]…[were] Alfred Jarry, Odilon Redon, Maurice Denis, Maurice de Vlaminck…" Guillaume Apollinaire, "La vie anecdotique. La cave de la rue Laffitte," *Mercure de France* (1 June 1913) 661.

21 Vollard, *Recollections* 100.

22 Georges Besson, "Signalements. Ambroise Vollard," *Arts de France* 13/14 (1947): 33-34.

23 Pierre Daix, *Picasso au Bateau-Lavoir* (Paris: Flammarion, 1994) 27.

24 Vollard, *Souvenirs d'un marchand de tableaux* (Paris: Éditions du Club des Libraires de France, 1957) 212.

25 Cheval 15.

26 André Breton's first Surrealist Manifesto was published in 1924: Breton, *Manifeste du surréalisme. Poisson soluble.* (Paris, Éditions du Sagittaire, 1924). The second was published in 1929: Breton, *Second manifeste du surréalisme* (Paris: Éditions Kra, 1930). The journal *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution* was published between 1930-1933.

27 André Suarès, "À la gloire d'Ubu," *Tout Ubu colonial*, Vollard and Morel, 69.

28 See entry for "réincarnation" in *Trésor de la Langue Française Informatisé* http://atilf.atilf.fr/tlf.htm Accessed 20 April 2008.

29 "…the harrowing, anguished drawings full of pity and irony.… In my opinion, few painters since Daumier have attained such a degree of the sublime in comedy, which is here indistinguishable from the sublime in tragedy." Guillaume Apollinaire, "Georges Rouault's Albums" (1914), *Apollinaire on Art: Essays and Reviews 1902-1918*, ed. Leroy C. Breunig (1972; Boston: ArtWorks, 2001) 417.

30 For a comparison of the *renouveau catholique* with surrealism, see Stephen Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism: Mystic Modernism in Postwar Paris, 1919-1933* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 2005) 110-119.

31 "Grotesque"—from Italian "grottesca" ("grotta")—includes strangeness and even extravagance. Thanks

to a metonymical shift, *Réincarnations du Père Ubu* could be a "grotesque." Compare Umberto Eco, *On Ugliness* (New York: Rizzoli, 2007); *The Grotesque in Art & Literature: Theological Reflections*, ed. James Luther Adams and Wilson Yates (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1997); Caroline Walker Bynum, "Wonder," *American Historical Review* 102/1 (February 1997) 1-17.

32 See essay by Jody Blake in the present volume.

33 Suarès, "À la gloire d'Ubu," 70.

34 Una E. Johnson writes that "once the artist started work Vollard never interfered with his interpretation." Johnson, *Ambroise Vollard, Éditeur: Prints, Books, Bronzes* (New York: Museum of Modern Art; Boston: distributed by New York Graphic Society, 1977) 23. Johnson adds elsewhere: "Vollard's own conception and Rouault's heroic-comic symbols have much in common. However, Rouault lifted Vollard's Ubu to a plane of somber drama." Johnson, "Foreword" to Vollard, *Recollections* 14.

The Colonial Scourge: Père Ubu from the Brazza Mission to the Paris Exposition Coloniale

Jody Blake

The consensus today is that Georges Rouault's illustrations of Ambroise Vollard's text, *Les Réincarnations du Père Ubu* (1932), elevated topical political satire into universal human drama.[1] Rouault would be pleased to have his work compared to that of Francisco de Goya and Honoré Daumier, whose *Disasters of War* (1808-14) and *Rue Transnonain* (1834) are also judged to transcend place and time. However, if it is important to situate Goya's etchings and Daumier's lithographs in Spain of the Napoleonic invasion and France of the July Monarchy, respectively, it is even more crucial to locate *Les Réincarnations du Père Ubu* in the context of French colonialism in Africa. Rouault's illustrations may have been steeped in the art historical tradition he respected, but they were also ripped from the pages of the leftist press as revelations of colonial abuses reached the French capital, outraging many in the modernist avant-garde.

As Rouault discovered when he came to grips with Vollard's "Ubu Colonial," Africa at the apogee of *La Plus Grande France* ("Greater France") was hardly a timeless place existing outside of history. French popular culture depicted antebellum cakewalks and tribal bamboulas at the height of the great migration of blacks from the American South and amid the destruction of village life in West and Central Africa. Such entertainments as *Les Joyeux Nègres* (The Happy Negroes, 1902) and "La Danse des Sauvages" (The Dance of the Savages, 1925) reinforced the ahistorical racist myths exposed by the French artists and writers associated with the anti-colonialist left, from the Catholic socialist Léon Bloy's "Jesus Christ in the Colonies" (1909) to the communists' *La Vérité sur les Colonies* (The Truth about the Colonies) exhibition of 1931.

However, the brutality that informed Vollard's texts—from the rubber fields of the Congo to the route of the Congo-Ocean railroad—is not currently part of the art historical discussion of Rouault's etchings of *Le Fléau Colon* (The Colonial Scourge) and the other standard bearers of the French Empire. Vollard stated that Père Ubu's colonial expositions were based on definitions from *Le Petit Larousse* dictionary, his memories of La Réunion, and "the events that were noteworthy during that year but are today totally outdated." Writing in 1919, the events Vollard had in mind were the Boulanger affair and the discovery of the Transvaal.[2] Now, a century later, it is time to remember the true origins of *Les Réincarnations du Père Ubu*: they lie in 1905-06 and 1931: the Gaud-Toqué Affair and The Truth about the Colonies.

In an appearance before the Parliamentary Colonial Commission, Ubu explained that his philosophy of governing in Africa consisted of using carrots and sticks—of dynamite. "M. Governor will have to have them diligently beaten, even put dynamite cartridges up their asses..."[3] Judging from the cartoons in *L'Assiette au beurre* and the transcripts of the trial testimony of Fernand Gaud, it seems that Ubu received his training not at the École Coloniale but rather at the center of the 1905-06 scandal in French Equatorial Africa that fueled the rise of anti-colonialism in France.

On July 14, 1903, in Oubangui-Chari, Georges Toqué and Fernand Gaud made a cautionary example of a Congolese porter named Pakpa, who was suspected of ambushing French guards, by turning him into a human firecracker. Gaud reportedly explained, "It seems stupid; but it will stupefy the natives. If after that they don't stay quiet!"[4] This incident, depicted straightforwardly by some satirists, also became a metaphor for French rule, as in Jules Grandjouan "Le joujou colonial" (The colonial plaything) from *L'Assiette au beurre* (**fig. 1**), in which a Colonial administrator demonstrates how easy it is to manipulate the Congo, represented by grotesquely exploding toys.

Fig. 1. Jules Grandjouan "The colonial plaything: It's cute, easy to use, and guaranteed by the government." *L'Assiette au beurre*, no. 248, 30 December 1905. Collection of the Author

European imperial conquests took a toll throughout sub-Saharan Africa. Nowhere was the situation more grievous than in the Congo, both Belgian and French, where village life was destroyed and the population decimated by war, disease, and forced labor—harvesting rubber in the 1890s, and then building the Congo-Ocean railroad in the 1920s. As Patricia Leighten has shown, these atrocities reverberated in modernist circles receptive to African arts and sympathetic to anarchism and socialism.[5] *L'Assiette au beurre*, Paris's most hard-hitting and visually compelling satirical review from 1901-1912,[6] responded with special issues devoted to the Congo and related topics.

Rouault's illustrations for *Les Réincarnations du Père Ubu* were very much in this tradition. In one of his early wash drawings for the book project (**no. 20**), Ubu, helmeted and carrying a rifle, looms on the horizon ready to rape and pillage Africa stretched out before him like the nudes of Matisse and Picasso. Rouault's image also calls to mind such cartoons as "Pensées d'un Ventru" (Thoughts of a Pot-Bellied, 1905), the domestic and foreign policy reflections of an Ubu look-alike who contrasts the "ignoble" actions of striking French workers (**fig. 2**) with the "sublime" deeds of French colonial soldiers (**fig. 3**). Auguste Roubille's "...il est souvent sublime" (he is often sublime) is the African counterpart to Goya's *Disasters of War* of 1808-1814 with its anonymous Napoleonic soldiers, eyes hidden by helmets, a heartless killing machine (see examples, in Schloesser "1921-1929"). Roubille explicitly shows what Rouault only suggests, a family slaughtered in front of their hut, a Congolese *Rue Transnonain* (Schloesser, "1871-1901," fig. 3), Daumier's depiction of "collateral damage" when the July Monarchy suppressed the republican uprising of 1834.

Roubille's cartoon was just one expression of the outrage triggered by the Gaud-Toqué scandal of 1905-06, when the French Government was

Fig. 2. Auguste Roubille, "As for the worker, if he is sometimes ignoble..." *L'Assiette au beurre*, no. 199, January 1905. Private Collection

Fig. 3. Auguste Roubille, "...he is frequently sublime," *L'Assiette au beurre*, no. 199, January 1905. Private Collection

pressured to investigate reports of brutality in enforcing mandatory labor, tax collection, and food requisitioning. To guarantee compliance, resisters were killed or mutilated and hostages were taken, including women and children who were raped, infected, and starved. The report of the mission, led by the respected General Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza who died of dysentery while fulfilling his duties, confirmed such atrocities. Although it was covered up by the French government, the admission by one of the accused that a "general massacre [had been] perpetrated to make the [colonial] service work," made its way to the Parisian press in early 1905. Despite government pressure, Charles Péguy published a first-hand account of the Brazza mission by Félicien Challaye in his *Cahiers de la quinzaine* in February 1906. In his preface to Challaye's "Le Congo français," Péguy stated: "No one predicted then how this mission would end, in what mourning it would terminate, and in what sadness, in what slight of hand one would try to make its outcome be forgotten. Let us as least recognize what we can salvage from it."[7]

Through practices investigated by the Brazza Mission and documented by André Gide in *Voyage au Congo* (1927), France and its commercial concessionaires, like Belgium, managed to despoil and depopulate one of its most lucrative colonial holdings, the ivory and rubber rich Congo. Vollard grasped that nothing could be more absurd—and so he relocated Père Ubu's ravages from the Poland of Alfred Jarry's *Ubu Roi* to Africa. In Jarry's crude illustration for the 1896 theatre program (**fig. 4**) a pseudo *image-d'épinal*, King Ubu, with Gallic beak and bourgeois gut, clutches his moneybag while razing the home of peasants unable to pay their taxes. Wearing pith helmet and jodhpurs, Rouault's *Colonial Administrator* (**no. 28h**) sagely admonishes the wide-eyed natives at his feet. According to Ubu's twisted logic, expounded in Vollard's "The Colonial Policy of Ubu" (1919), the best way for a country to safeguard its colonies was by totally

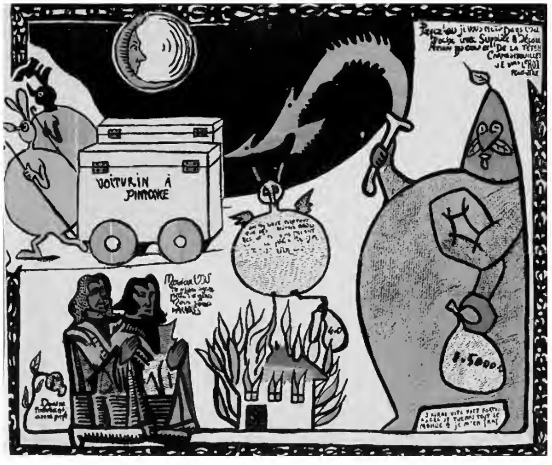


Fig. 4. Alfred Jarry, Program for *Ubu roi*, Théâtre de l'Oeuvre, Paris, 1896, color lithograph. Collection of the McNay Art Museum, TL2005.70.1

destroying them, so that its rivals would not want to compete for them.[8]

The cover of Toqué's *Les Massacres du Congo: La terre qui ment, la terre qui brûle* (The Massacres of the Congo: The Earth that Lies, The Earth that Burns, **fig. 5**), memoirs and trial testimony published after his release from prison in 1907, shows an officer firing point blank at a group of men writhing in pain on the ground. This officer is "backed up" not only by a government administrator but also by a Catholic priest who seems to relish the bloody violence. As depicted by Rouault (who once said that Catholics had "killed" him[9]), *Ubu Chantre*, with his upturned eyes and soaring hymns (**no. 28k**), seems to be cloaking his bloody deeds in a white chasuble and false piety. In an obvious reference to the Gaud-Togué scandal, Rouault's former mentor, Bloy, condemned the violence with which "the Savior of the World" was carried to the colonies. A supporter of France's humanitarian mission in the colonies, and of Catholicism's role in it, Bloy put the blame for such atrocities on military officers and government officials. However, anti-clerical critics of colonialism did not let the Church escape blame so easily. In a cartoon in the anarchist *Les Temps Nouveaux* (1905), Rouault's fellow Fauve Kees van Dongen depicted a white robed and grotesquely grinning Jesus hovering over global destruction.[10] Ironically entitled "Le Peril blanc" (The White Peril), this cartoon implicated the Church in atrocities committed in the name of bringing light into the darkness of Africa.

The Catholic Church's primary mission in Africa was to save souls by converting natives to Christianity. Through its schools and hospitals, however, the Church also assumed responsibility for the State's secular humanitarian mission.[11] The success of education provided by the "good brothers" is evidenced in the Ubu texts, which draw upon Vollard's experience of mission schools in La Réunion. Frère Ignorantin seems to accept the racist belief of the time that blacks were capable only of imitation, like monkeys or parrots, not of originality, and of concrete rather than abstract thinking. Yet, in Ubu's inverted world, when pupils recite, "The big 'Q' is made up with the big 'O'… which is not a mother letter, and from the small 'c,' a mother letter,"[12] it is the utterly mind numbing and irrelevant nonsense of French education that is called into question. When a Christian convert accidentally strangles the pigeon to be released at the end of Sunday mass, and announces, "The Holy Spirit is no longer able to descend, he is dead,"[13] the symbolic meaning is devastatingly clear.

1901–1925: The Ubu of Jarry-Vollard

Père Ubu's colonial world, as created by Jarry and elaborated by Vollard, is above all one of inversion. For a full and complete account of the origins of "Ubu Colonial" one must look, not to Vollard's

Reminiscence of a Picture Dealer (1936), but to Père Ubu's testimony before the League of Nations in 1919. In response to questions from Le Président de la Société des Nations (SDN) regarding his "colonial expeditions," Père Ubu explained:

> In truth, the said colonial expedition consisted mainly of a lunch in Mr. Ambroise Vollard's cellar, where he had invited us along with Mr. Jarry, Bonnard, Terrasse and Fagus, our historiographer, painter, musician and favorite poet (respectively), in the view of making an almanac from bits of a Larousse dictionary, which we had cut up into pieces for that purpose and tossed into a hat. Each one of us pulled out a name at random, like a lottery.... Mr. Vollard told stories about Negroes that Mr. Jarry jotted down with one hand, while with the other he wrote down the noteworthy events of the current year but which today are totally outdated.[14]

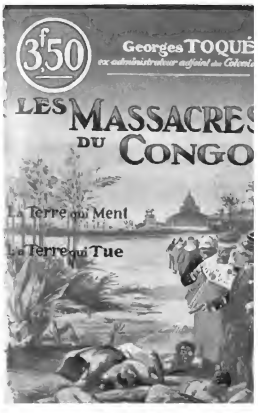


Fig. 5. Cover of Georges Toqué, *Les Massacres du Congo, La Terre qui Ment, La Terre qui Tue*, 1907. Courtesy Centre des Archives d'Outre-Mer

Jarry's "Ubu Colonial," published in *L'Almanach du Père Ubu* (1901), and Vollard's "La politique coloniale du Père Ubu" (1919) and "Les problèmes coloniaux devant la Société des Nations" (1919), edited in *Les Réincarnations du Père Ubu* (1925; folio in 1932), do seem to be created by the outlandish procedure described by Père Ubu, as scholarly annotations to these texts indicate. Encyclopedia entries for *A(utruche), B(ananier), C(ocotier),* and other exotic flora and fauna; Vollard's reminiscences of growing up off the coast of Africa in the French colony of La Réunion; and newspaper coverage of colonial debates and scandals—these were the raw materials for "Ubu Colonial" and, indeed, for the French colonial imagination.[15]

Père Ubu, it seems, was not only an insightful literary critic but also a prescient cultural historian. The drawing of Larousse entries by chance out of a hat and the ambidextrous transcription of Vollard's childhood tales and dated news items are obvious references to the Zurich Dadaists' creative explorations of 1916-1918. Along with Jean Arp's *Squares Arranged According to the Laws of Chance* and Tristan Tzara's "simultaneous poems," these essays in the random and absurd were transported from neutral Zurich to post-armistice Paris in 1920. With Ubu as his mouthpiece, Vollard consolidated Jarry's status as a progenitor of Dada and Surrealism. He established the Cave de Vollard of 1901 as a Cabaret Voltaire *avant la lettre* (**fig. 6**), appropriating Marcel Janco's Africanizing masks and Hugo Ball's "tam-tam" like big drum in the process.

In quintessential Paris Dada fashion, visitors to the opening of Frances Picabia's 1920 anti-art exhibition at a Left Bank gallery were assaulted by a pseudo jazz band capitalizing on the popularity of the music introduced by the United States Army's segregated regiments. The Dadaists and future Surrealists frequented the Montmartre clubs where African Americans, including clarinetist Sidney Bechet, played the music that Philippe Soupault and other poets believed was conducive to pure psychic automatism. The ironically named Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich and *Littérature* magazine in Paris underscore that Enlightenment reason and order—indeed the very concept of "civilization" itself—were among the casualties of the First World War.

"Ubu Colonial," born at Vollard's famous déjeuners and rejuvenated in Dada and Surrealist cabarets, belongs at the center of the history of modernist primitivism. The art dealer could take some credit for the modernist appropriation of *art*

Fig.6. Marcel Janco, *Cabaret Voltaire*, 1916
Current location unknown

Fig. 7. Photograph of André Derain's Paris studio, ca. 1912-1913, showing a Fang mask (top center) and a Fang reliquary figure (bottom center).

nègre, which included both the sculpture of black Africa (**fig. 7**) and the music and dance of black America (**fig. 9**). Artists whom Vollard had discovered, including Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso, were among the first to translate their fascination with West and Central African masks and figures into such paintings as *The Blue Nude* (1907) and *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* (**fig. 8**) respectively. Writers who gathered at Vollard's, including Guillaume Apollinaire, Max Jacob, and André Salmon, took the lead in signaling the cultural importance of the ragtime and cakewalks of the 1900s and the jazz bands and Charleston and Blackbottom of the 1920s (**fig. 9**). In his *Chronique des temps héroïques* (Chronicle of Heroic Times, written 1936-37), Jacob looked back on his artist-friends' "discovery" of African art three decades earlier, marveling how the African wood carving in Picasso's hand gave rise to "thirty years of manias, of manners, of concerting and disconcerting music, of written and danced reviews."[16]

Far from being a strictly artistic exercise, primitivism from Matisse and Picasso to the Dadaists and Surrealists had profound social and political implications. No one understood this better than two other habitués of Vollard's cellar, Georges Athénas and Aimé Merlo, who hailed from La Réunion like their host and wrote under the name Marius-Ary Leblond. In their 1924 novel *Ulysse, cafre*, a Réunionais student and believer in France's *mission civilisatrice* in Africa arrives in Paris to complete his education. He is appalled at what he discovers—that the modernist art world had been converted to the "Gospel of Paul Gauguin" first preached at Vollard's. Galleries "exhibited on marble pedestals the most rude and terrifying images of the Upper Congo"; publishers "welcomed their poetry, their legends, their cosmogonies"; and theatres "unleashed the nocturnal spectacle of African dances and incantations." All this was bad enough, but what really appalled the young colonist was the "sorcery" in the halls of science where "masters of psychology were no longer studying the conscious mind, but the secrets of the subconscious; where doctors were writing works on mediums, pharmacists on magic" (an obvious reference to the Surrealists). "The darkness of Africa…has rapidly invaded our light." "The earth had turned" and "the Black Continent" now had "Paris for its capital."[17] France's "civilizing mission," used to rationalize and promote its economic, military, and political colonialism in Africa, Asia, and the Americas, was totally discredited.

"Ubu Colonial," the fictional embodiment of French colonial power at its worst, underscores the political component of modernist primitivism. It is no coincidence that Jarry and Vollard conceived and elaborated Père Ubu's colonial persona at crucial points in avant-garde engagement with both *art nègre* and anti-colonialism, at the *fin-de-siècle* and during *l'après-guerre*. At the turn of the century, Europe's scramble for colonies in Africa had come to a close and reports of military victories were being replaced by allegations of colonial atrocities, all equally bloody. Jarry staged *Ubu roi* at the Théâtre de l'Oeuvre in 1896, when the Franco-Dahomean War of 1892-1894 was fresh in audiences' minds. Vollard published Jarry's "Ubu Colonial" in *L'Almanach du Père Ubu* in 1901 (with illustrations by Pierre Bonnard) amid mounting rumors of brutality in rubber fields of the French (and Belgian) Congo that culminated in the Brazza Mission of 1905.[18] Charges of torture and hostage taking reverberated in satirical images by artists allied with the political left and, as Leighten has argued, informed such landmarks of modern art as Picasso's *Demoiselles d'Avignon* (**fig. 8**).[19]

The cataclysmic stupidity of the First World War, which motivated Vollard to bring Père Ubu back to life,[20] was a proving ground for France's policy of the economic and strategic exploitation (or "*mise en valeur*") of its colonies. The International Communist Party and African Nationalist resistance movements were also products of the war in which tens of thousands of so-called Tirailleurs Sénégalais ("Senegalese Skirmishers") had been sacrificed as cannon fodder. Anti-imperialist protests culminated at the time of the Paris Exposition Coloniale of 1931, held to celebrate and promote *La Plus Grande France* ("Greater France").[21] No effort to counter official propaganda was more devastating than the exhibition entitled *La Verité sur les Colonies* (The Truth About the Colonies) in which the Surrealists were active participants.

Fig. 8. Pablo Picasso, *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*, 1907, oil on canvas, 8 ft. x 7 ft. 8 in. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest. ©1999 Estate of Pablo Picasso/Artists Rights Society, NY

1931: The Truth about the Colonies

Les Réincarnations du Père Ubu unmasked the instruments of French colonialism, the military, the government, and the church, complicating distinctions between justice and brutality, education and ignorance, religion and superstition, and indeed between civilization and savagery. The publication of Vollard's texts and Rouault's illustrations in 1932, although the result of unintentional delay, was well timed. The preceding year, the attention of Paris had been focused on L'Exposition Coloniale Internationale held in the Bois de Vincennes from May through December 1931, with the goal of instilling patriotic pride in France's *mission civilisatrice* and promoting the economic *mise en valeur* of its colonies.[22] Opponents of colonialism seized the opportunity to counter the government's message, most notably in *La Vérité sur les Colonies*, also known as the anti-imperialist exhibition. The Truth About the Colonies was sponsored by the French section of the Anti-Imperialist League, a satellite of the Communist International which had decreed in 1928 that combating colonialism was an integral part of overthrowing capitalism. In organizing the exhibition, members of the French Communist Party were joined by affiliate organizations including the Ligue de Défense de la Race

Nègre, an early pan-African anti-imperialist group. French intellectuals also lent their support, including members of the Surrealist group who had joined the PCF because of its anti-colonialis position.

The stated goal of The Truth about the Colonies was to uncover the lies of French colonialism and to achieve this by imitating the official exposition but in a "contrary sense."[23] This was a variant of the strategy of inversion that had been pioneered at the turn of the century by cartoonists in *L'Assiette au Beurre* and by Jarry and Vollard in *L'Almanach du Pére Ubu*.[24] In 1931, the issues were the same as they had been at the time of the Gaud-Toqué scandal and the Brazza Mission: the abuses of forced labor in French Equatorial and West Africa. The most notorious example was the construction of the Congo-Ocean railroad, begun in 1921, whose benefits in linking Brazzaville (capital of French Equatorial Africa) with the Atlantic Ocean were touted in Public Works exhibits at the government-sponsored exposition.[25] *L'Humanité*, the organ of the PCF and the only Paris daily opposing the Exposition Coloniale, published a series of articles entitled "Derrière le décor de Vincennes" (Behind the decoration of Vincennes). One headline (**fig. 10**) declared that 17,000 Africans had been sacrificed in the Congo to complete 200 kilometers, a human cost underscored by the drawing of a column of laborers brutalized by colonial officials brandishing whips and rifles. The Secours Rouge International, the communist counterpart to the Red Cross, published a *Véritable Guide* (True Guide) to the Colonial Exposition, which included a similar drawing of African porters and details of the government's dissimulation of the human costs of the railroad.

The Truth about the Colonies lived up to its name, even uncovering what was behind "*tatane*," a colonial myth to which Vollard had been introduced when, as a child, he had been fascinated by an old print showing a runaway slave hiding in a palm tree. According to Vollard's nanny, the African had climbed the coconut palm tree in the hope that he would be shot down so that he would break a limb and not have to work.[26] *Le Veritable Guide* deconstructed this image: "The Brazzaville-Ocean railway line cost a life every four meters. Tribes fled from their villages into the forest, preferring famine and death in freedom to beatings and death under the heavy load."[27] The SRI also gave a human and heroic face to African resisters, in the person of Cheikhou-Cissé of Sénégal, who, after fighting for France in the trenches in World War I, was con-

Fig. 9. Armand Vallée, "The Eighth Wonder of the World... of Dance: Le Black-bottom." *Le Rire*, 13 Novembre 1926. University of Virginia Library

Fig. 10. "Behind the decoration of Vincennes. 17,000 Negroes have been sacrificed in the Congo." *L'Humanité*, 21 May 1931. Courtesy Centre des Archives d'Outre-Mer

demned and deported for refusing to work the fields belonging to colonialists in Dakar.

In a period of declining wages, rising unemployment, and political unrest, both the Colonial Exposition and The Truth about the Colonies courted French workers. The government staged the Exposition Coloniale in the eastern suburbs of Paris hoping to placate residents of this working-class district and win them over to its colonial project. The communist organizers of The Truth about the Colonies, on the other hand, sought to raise the consciousness of French workers and generate solidarity between them and colonial workers. They distributed flyers calling attention to the fact that the official exposition had cost hundreds of millions of francs that could have been used to improve the lot of workers both at home and in Africa. In a speech at a Paris rally, Tiemoko Garan Kouyaté, a Sudanese teacher and LDRN leader admonished French workers: "One wants to create racial prejudices in you. Do not forget that only class action is bound to raise up the exploited of all nations against their exploiters."[28] Kouyaté, who was jailed while organizing workers in the port of Marseilles, was just one of the anti-imperialists put behind bars in an attempt to stifle protests against the Colonial Exposition.

The anti-imperialists turned the government's lies upside-down, exposing what was behind the official facades and unearthing the ideological foundations on which colonialism was constructed. France's colonial minister, Paul Reynaud, stated: "It is in the nature of things that people who have arrived at a superior level of evolution, bend over towards those who are at an inferior level to raise them up."[29] However, if one believes the *Humanité* cartoon—"Tiens! On a donc mis Lyautey et Pasquier en cage? ("Look! So somebody has caged up Lyautey and Pasquier?"—**fig. 11**) the "real cannibals" on display included none other than Maréchal Hubert Lyautey, director of the Colonial Exposition who had blood on his hands as former Governor General of Morocco. Similarly, in "Où a-tu appris cette danse de sauvage?" (Where did you learn this wild dance?), a dancer attributes her choreography to the Exposition Coloniale itself, which was criticized by the Ligue de Défense de la Race Nègre for "crude caricatures of the art of colonized people's ancestors"[30] (**fig. 12**).

For the Surrealists, such inversions had profound implications touching on esoteric philosophy

Fig. 11. "Look! So somebody has caged up Lyautey and Pasquier?" *L'Humanité*, 22 April 1931. Courtesy Centre des Archives d'Outre-Mer

Fig. 12. "Where did you learn this wild dance?" *L'Humanité*, 21 April 1931. Courtesy Centre des Archives d'Outre-Mer

Fig. 13. Photographs of the exhibition "Verité sur les Colonies," *Le Surréalisme au service de la revolution*, no. 4, December 1931

anathema to the Communist party and dialectical materialism.[31] In their opposition to the Colonial Exposition, the Surrealists managed to keep art and politics in balance in their activities as "intellectual workers." Under André Breton's leadership, they circulated two tracts—"Ne visitez pas l'Exposition Coloniale" (Don't Visit the Colonial Exposition) and "Premier Bilan de l'Exposition Coloniale" (First Balance Sheet of the Colonial Exposition)—echoing anti-imperialist rhetoric. In addition, Louis Aragon, assisted by fellow-poet Paul Éluard and painter Yves Tanguy, organized the cultural component of The Truth about the Colonies, including an exhibition of African, Oceanic, and Native American art (much from their own collections) rivaling any in official pavilions (**fig. 13**). African objects, including a Baule horned animal helmet mask and a Luba stool supported by a crouching female figure, were contrasted with what the Surrealists labeled "European fetishes." Consisting of devotional figurines used by Christian missions, these included a votive figure in the guise of an African holding a collection bag and a Madonna and Child whose appearance may have been Africanized. The message of this exhibit was clear: the superstitious fetish-worshipers are not colonized peoples, but Christian missionaries with their gilded Madonnas and bleeding crucifixes. The superior artists are not Europeans, with their bad taste, gross sentiments, and mass production, but indigenous artists.

The Surrealists were supported in these cultural efforts by the Ligue de Défense de la Race Nègre (LDRN), which organized the musical component of the exhibition. Artistic revindication was, however, suspect among communists because of its association with bourgeois assimilationists including René Maran. A native of Martinique working in the colonial service in French Equatorial Africa, Maran had stunned France a decade earlier with *Batouala: Véritable roman nègre* (Batouala: A True Negro Novel), which received the prestigious Prix Goncourt in 1921. Maran prefaced his book with a scathing indictment: "Civilization, pride of the Europeans....You build your kingdom on corpses.... You are the might which exceeds right. You aren't a torch but an inferno."[32] In 1924, Maran had founded the pan-African artistic and literary journal *Les Continents*, which is often viewed as a precursor to the Négritude movement of the 1930s.[33] An unidentified contributor to

Fig. 14. Poster for *Banania*, "Delightful sweetened lunch. Delicious food for the delicate stomachs. On sale everywhere." ca. 1917. Courtesy Bibliothèque Forney

the LDRN publication *Le Cri des nègres* (The Cry of the Negroes) stated: "To demonstrate the so-called necessity of their 'educational' role, the imperialists have always taught us that we belong to an 'inferior' race. That is not true." Fellow LDRN member Stéphane Rosso from the Antilles concluded: "The African has his secular customs and his traditions; he also has his history and his civilization.... It is legitimate for the Negroes to pose the question of their freedom and their independence."[34]

The role of the LDRN and other indigenous groups in The Truth about the Colonies represented, perhaps, the most profound inversion of the established order, upsetting the relationship between the colonialists and the colonized. The First World War, in which between 150,000 and 200,000 francophone Africans had served (and as many as a third of these had perished in the trenches), had been a catalyzing event. The educated elite were disillusioned over broken promises, the belief that patriotic sacrifice would result in fuller citizenship. This elite was represented by Blaise Diagne, Sénegal's representative in the Chamber of Deputies from 1914-1934, who had been largely responsible for the World War I recruiting effort in French West Africa. Initially an anti-colonialist critic and a defender of the voting rights of enfranchised Senegalese, he later compromised his ideals as a member of the French government. At the second Pan-African Congress in Paris in 1921, he forced fellow delegates to weaken a resolution condemning abuses in the Belgian Congo. At the Conference of the International Labor Organization in Geneva in 1930, which passed the "Convention Concerning Forced or Compulsory Labor," Diagne defended France's forced labor policies in the Congo:

Le Cri des
Organe mensuel des
L'Exposition Coloniale Internationale
SON VÉRITABLE SENS

Fig. 15. Detail of front page of *Le Cri des Nègres* (The Cry of Negroes): *Monthly Journal of Negro Workers*, September 1931. Courtesy Centre des Archives d'Outre-Mer

> The French government is in favor of the total suppression of this contemporary form of slavery and enslavement, and you will perhaps be surprised that a man who belongs to one of those races on whom, for four centuries, slavery has weighed heavily, has come here to bring at the same time the adherence of both France and himself in solidarity with those very races.[35]

The following year, 1931, the year of the Exposition Coloniale, Diagne became Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, but mandatory/forced labor was not abolished for another fifteen years.

The masses of blacks were up in arms over violently enforced military conscription, an extension of the forced labor system. They were represented by Lamine Senghor, a recipient of the Croix de Guerre in World War I, who founded the Ligue de Défense de la Race Nègre in 1927.[36] Senghor confounded the stereotype of the so-called *tirailleur senégalais* (Senegalese skirmisher) as a grinning big child perpetuated by Banania advertisements (**fig. 14**), whose slogan "y'a bon" was among "Ubu Colonial's" *petit nègre* lexicon. Indeed, Senghor exploded this stereotype along with the notion that Ubu's "Bon Candidat" and "Bon Électeur" (**nos. 28p–q**)—both given the pretentious top hats and the pejorative names Malikoko and Bamboula familiar from popular culture—would continue to be manipulated by the French colonial system.[37] The masthead of *Le Cri des nègres*, the organ of the LDRN, pictured a muscular black man breaking the chains of imperialism (**fig. 15**), one foot in Africa and the other in the Americas, spanning the Atlantic like a Black Colossus.

Fig. 16. Pierre Bonnard, "These Negroes blushed upon hearing the next song and this closest page is already red-white," from *Almanach illustré du Père Ubu*, 1901, reprinted 1948, p.113. Collection of the McNay Art Museum, TL1984.1.860.8

1932: The Ubu of Vollard-Rouault

Only months after The Truth About the Colonies closed its doors, Vollard published *Les Réincarnations du Père Ubu* with his own texts and Rouault's full-page etchings (as well as with engravings after Rouault in the text). This timing has been largely ignored by art historians, along with the specific political contexts of Ubu's reincarnations in Vollard's texts and Rouault's images.[38] To associate Rouault with the history of modernist primitivism and anti-imperialism would involve a radical revision of his art historical reputation. Rouault had come of age artistically from within the "Wild Beasts' cage" of Les Fauves at the Salon d'Automne of 1905, a crucial time for primitivism and anti-colonialism, as artists turned their attention to African sculpture amid news of scandals in the Congo. However, Rouault did not overtly share the enthusiasm of Matisse and André Derain for so-called tribal masks and figures from France's colonies in West and Central Africa,[39] and, unlike Maurice de Vlaminck or Kees Van Dongen, he was not known for contributions to the political cartoons in the leftist illustrated press.

Nevertheless, like the other Fauves, Rouault was an admirer of the eclectic father of primitivism, Paul Gauguin, who had famously abandoned his career and family in pursuit of artistic paradise in Tahiti only to find it destroyed by the French. Indeed, Rouault's illustration for the frontispiece for *Les Réincarnations du Père Ubu* was clearly indebted to Gauguin's woodcuts, and may also have referenced the Vili figure from the Congo in Matisse's collection, or other West and Central African sculpture.[40]

In addition, Rouault, who proposed to illustrate a volume of popular songs, would have been familiar with entertainments of the ragtime era and the jazz age. As Jean Morel has argued, such popular hits as Félix Mayol's song "Boudoubadabou" (1913) and the musical review *Malikoko roi nègre* (1919), most likely inspired the names of characters in Vollard's texts and Rouault's images in *Les Réincarnations du Père Ubu*.[41] These popular entertainments, featuring the tragic-comic native Boudoubadabou (conscripted into the French colonial Army) and the cannibal king Malikoko (named after the Congolese leader Makoko), made sport of racist stereotypes and current and historical events in Africa.

There was also a tradition, going back to *L'Almanach du Père Ubu* of 1901, of modernists' trading in racist stereotypes to parody their own self-conscious primitivism and subvert their audiences' prejudices. In "Ces nègres ont rougi à entendre la chanson suivante" (These Negroes blushed upon hearing the next song), Jarry and composer Claude Terrasse set out to shock, not the stereotypically uninhibited Africans in the Ubu texts (and Bonnard's illustrations), but French readers whose skin would turn the color of the red ink in Bonnard's illustrations (**fig. 16**). In 1922, the artistic and literary magazine *Le Crapouillot* published the scenario for a "ballet nègre" featuring Dada poet Tristan Tsahara [Tzara], Martiniquan Prix Goncourt laureate René Maran, Senegalese Deputé Blaise Diagne, and other members of "les Folies-Culaires." Chanting "Ses dieux, ses dieux camards/

Ses jolis dieux, enfanc' de l'art" (His gods, his flat nosed gods/His pretty gods, childhood of art), they made light of the dire predictions concerning the *négrification* of French culture.[42]

Moreover, the circumstance of Rouault's birth, in working-class Belleville amid the repression of the Commune, was crucial to his identification with the victims of authority, presumably including colonized blacks. Unlike successful French revolutions of 1792 and 1848, which resulted in the abolition of slavery and the expansion of citizenship in France's "old colonies," the Commune was followed by heightened colonialist zeal in Africa, as France sought to compensate for its loss of Alsace-Lorraine in the Franco-Prussia war. Both Péguy (an early mentor of Jacques and Raïssa Maritain) and Bloy (mentor to both the Maritains and Rouault) were Catholic, anti-colonialist reformers who supported the humanitarian goals of French colonialism but criticized its abuses.[43] Péguy used his *Cahiers de la quinzaine* to publish exposés of colonial atrocities including Challaye's "Le Congo Français" (1906), written by the secretary to the Brazza mission whose findings were incorporated in Vollard's texts. Beginning in the 1880s, Bloy railed against French abuses in Africa, Asia, and the Americas, culminating in "Jésus-Christ aux colonies," a chapter in his *Le Sang du Pauvre* (The Blood of the Poor, 1909):

> To speak only of the French colonies, what a clamor would be made if the victims could cry out! ... how can we offer something other than a hail of bullets to the butchers of natives, incapable, in France, of bleeding the least pig, but who, once they have become magistrates or quarter-master sergeants in far away districts, calmly quarter men, dismember them, burn them alive, feed them to the red ants, inflict unnameable torments to punish them for having hesitated to give them their women or their last coins!... It is thus that the work of the gentle dove of the 15th century came to be, and it is in this way that the Savior of the world was brought to the colonies.[44]

Fig. 17. Photograph of Josephine Baker and Joe Alex in the "Dance of the Savages," from *La Revue nègre*, Théâtre des Champs Elysées, Paris, 1925. Published in André Levinson, *La Danse d'aujourd'hui* (Paris, 1929). Collection of the McNay Art Museum Library Special Collections

Rouault was not Vollard's first choice to illustrate what became *Réincarnations du Père Ubu*, but he may not have been a bad choice after all. Père Ubu, as portrayed by Jarry in *Ubu Roi* and assisted by Vollard's input in "Ubu Colonial," was precisely the sort of sadistic tyrant that Bloy railed against. Cruel and greedy, this "King of Poland" was eminently qualified for a career overseas, bringing civilization to the African natives that Jarry's frequent collaborator, Bonnard, depicted in graffiti-like drawings in "Ubu Colonial" in 1901. What was the African predilection for "*tatane*" other than the laziness also attributed to the European working class in districts like Belleville?

Indeed, there was no better proving ground for "Ubu Colonial" than the Kingdom of Poland, or Congress Poland, under Russian imperial rule from 1815 to 1915. In response to the Russian Revolution of 1905, over 400,000 Polish workers undertook strike actions, notably in the socialist stronghold of Łódź where the army and police responded to the "June Days" with violent repression. The Łódź Insurrection coincided with the Gaud-Toqué scandal in France, involving charges of brutality against forced laborers in the French Congo. The

leftist illustrated press in Paris responded to these events in Poland and the Congo, which were all too familiar from the city's own history of barricades and massacres, with heartbreaking and similarly scathing images.[45]

These events are the political backdrop for the relationship between Rouault and Vollard in the production of *Réincarnations du Père Ubu*.[46] Although Rouault had frequented Vollard's gallery since the 1890s, he began to draw the dealer's attention as an artist in 1907. A decade later, in 1916, when Rouault accepted the Faustian bargain to illustrate Vollard's Ubu texts in exchange for the publication of his *Miserere* (eventually published 1948), he embarked on what proved to be a colonial mission of sorts following the paradigm of colonial fiction from Pierre Loti to André Gide.[47] Rouault's correspondence suggests that, at first, he saw the project as an opportunity to enjoy a certain relaxation and had no plans to faithfully illustrate Vollard's text. Rouault reportedly emphasized to Vollard that "it was just a fantasy of mine outside of the subject and without pretension."[48]

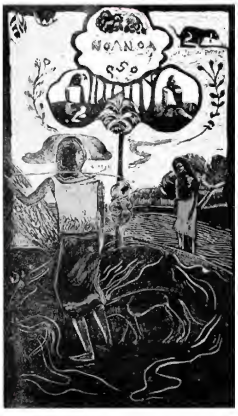


Fig. 18. Paul Gauguin, *Noa Noa*, 1893-94, Woodcut, Collection of the McNay Art Museum, 1994.113

However, as work on the Ubu project stretched out, with months turning into years and with the workload mounting, pleasure turned into drudgery. Indeed, as other scholars have pointed out, Rouault's correspondence provides evidence that he may have felt like a slave.[49] His friend André Suarès admonished him: "Ubu go to hell! [...] Vollard wants to keep you under his thumb. If you fall morally, he will damn you. Take advantage of him, and do not let yourself be enslaved.... Vollard is a vampire."[50] Suarès could not have been clearer in his references if he had said "cannibal."

Rouault, for his part, also traded in the language of African colonialism. In an act of wish fulfillment that would have been shared by porters in the Congo, he wrote in an open letter published in 1926: "If I wrote a work on Mr. A. Vollard, here is the title I would choose: 'The solitary life of an art dealer lost in the jungle.'"[51] Indeed, Rouault had entered into an agreement with Vollard that could—with considerable poetic and political license—be compared to the forced labor practices legal in France's African colonies.

Rouault may have started out on a vacation, but he ended up taking the trip from hell. Initially, Rouault clearly delighted in the project, reveling in the liberation of brush and ink drawing, creating a free flowing, spontaneous preliminary study, of blue skies, gentle hills, flowing waters, thatched huts, winding paths, graceful natives, and village feasts. In *Réincarnations du Père Ubu*, this imagery survives (**no. 28d**) but is disrupted by plates devoted to the symbols of colonial rule, Ubu the colonial officer and administrator, Ubu the Catholic chorister, the different guises of the Great White Father.

In the full-page etchings *hors texte*, even the Africans, the African everyman "Bamboula" and the African Adam and Eve of "Les Noces" (**no. 28e**), seemed cast in the mold of colonialist stereotypes. These were played out on the musical stage in *Les Joyeux nègres* of 1902, a circus pantomime that started the cakewalk craze, and "La Danse des Sauvages" in *La Revue nègre of 1925* (**fig. 17**), the show that launched Josephine Baker's career. Represented as grinning and childlike or leering and animalistic, blacks were to be educated, disciplined, uplifted, and repressed.

It is as if Rouault, steeped in the French enlightenment tradition of Diderot and Rousseau, had set out in search of the noble savage and natural paradise. In a tradition stretching through Gauguin back to the Romantics, including William Blake and Philip Otto Runge, Rouault referenced Eden complete with magical tree and serpent, primordial man and woman. Indeed, one

Fig. 19. Widholpff, Tribal members of the the "Achanti in the Garden of Acclimation," from *Le Courrier français*, 17 June 1903). Courtesy Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

would think Rouault was illustrating an African version of Gauguin's Tahitian idyll *Noa Noa* (**fig. 18**). Yet, as we now know from Abigail Solomon-Godeau's deconstruction of the Gauguin myth, his Tahitian paintings and prints hid the realities of French colonization.[52] "The civilized hordes arrive and run up a flag.... Everything perishes," Gauguin observed in 1900.[53] The Africa that Jarry, Bonnard, Vollard, and Rouault would have experienced in the ethnographic exhibitions at the Paris Jardin d'Acclimitation in the 1890s (**fig. 19**) or the Exposition Universelle of 1900, was equally deceptive. The thatched huts and native dancers falsely suggested a timeless world in which the European influence was kept, so to speak, on the other side of the exhibit enclosure.[54]

In the African Eden, therefore, Rouault discovered the "fallen world" that was his own "subject"—not the margin but the very center of his artistic work. Like anarchists, socialists, and communists, who took the anti-colonialist lead at different points in time, Rouault apparently understood the linkage between workers at home and slaves abroad, between imperialism in Europe and in Africa. *Réincarnations du Père Ubu* provided an opportunity to create iconic, hieratic, portraits of the perpetrators of "the colonial scourge": soldiers, administrators, missionaries, politicians, and their victims and collaborators. As Rouault embarked on the Ubu project surrounded by the carnage of the First World War, Africans could join the peasants, workers, prostitutes, criminals, and fugitives who populated his paintings of the 1910s.

Among art critics, André Salmon was well-qualified to assess Rouault's images devoted to Père Ubu. Salmon had assisted at the birth of modernist primitivism, including such socially and politically charged paintings as *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* (1907). With its deformation of prostitutes' bodies and decontextualization of African masks, Picasso's painting is open to charges of both sexism and cultural imperialism. Leighten has persuasively advanced an alternative reading of the painting, arguing that by Africanizing the prostitutes, by giving them facial features of Grebo masks from the Côte d'Ivoire or Kota reliquaries from Gabon, Baule and Grebo, Picasso actually drew attention to parallels between the exploitation of sex workers at home and forced laborers in Africa.[55] Salmon's *La Négresse du Sacre Coeur* (1920), the story of a planter and his African slave in the midst of Montmartre's artistic bohemia, raises similar issues. The year his novel was published, Salmon had the following to say about Rouault's own disconcerting and off-putting images.

> Rouault's art astonishes, often makes one move away; but, at the same time, it is very reasonable to admire it. Is he a caricaturist? Maybe. But one thing is certain, he is not a humorist. He does not have an indulgent vision of humanity. Humanity seems to prove Rouault right. His models are in Hell, M. Ubu and his cousins of the legal profession, of the sword, of phynance, of the court and the brothel. Without flaying, without emaciating his characters, he

makes them dance the most horrible danse macabre.[56]

In his essay, Salmon situated Ubu within Rouault's portrait gallery of authority figures: the judges, soldiers, financiers, lawyers, brothel madams. In his testimony before the SDN, Père Ubu stated that his present situation was "to be a cantor in the metropolitan church, and moreover a sub-prefect in extraordinary service with a black plume on his hat, giving us the rank of brigade general."[57] Ubu, who had been known to boast of "our ruinous colonial exploration paid for by the French government,"[58] embodied the three faces of French colonialism in Africa. Indeed, Army, State, and Church were shown shoulder to shoulder on the cover of Gaud's *Les Massacres du Congo*, memoirs of the colonial officer who had ignited, with a firecracker, the already smoldering fires of anti-colonialism in France.[59]

On the receiving end of the brutal punishment, inane legislation, and rote memorization inflicted by Ubu colonial is Bamboula (**no. 28c**), a figure as familiar from popular imagery as Ubu's various colonial incarnations. Slender of build and wearing a white loincloth, with elongated arms and exaggerated smile, Bamboula is a simian version—and racist inversion—of Leonardo da Vinci's Vitruvian man who, with his outstretched limbs inscribed in a circle, was the symbol of human perfection. "Bamboula" is indeed an appropriate name for Vollard to

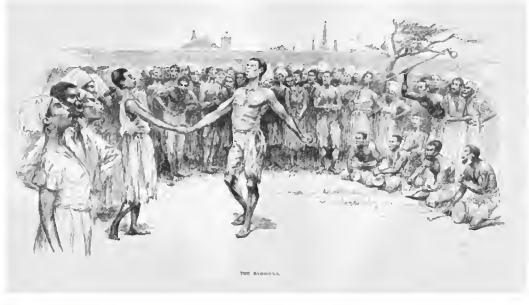


Fig. 20. E.W. Kemble, "The Bamboula," *Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine*, February 1886

Fig. 21. G .Ri (Victor Mousselet), "Garden Party in the Desert: Trying hard to ape the great Parisian World!" *Illustré national*, Christmas 1902. Courtesy Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

give to his lazy worker hiding in a palm tree and his "Bon Électeur" bribed by a top hat.

Nothing was considered more representative of "la mentalité primitive" (primitive mentality) than music and dance. Indeed, according to racist theorist Arthur de Gobineau, whose *L'Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* (*Essay on the inequality of human races*, 1853-55) served to justify colonialism, music and dance were the instinctive and "primitive" arts par excellent, "because sensuality is almost everything, if not everything, in the dance."[60] African leaders adopted top hats as an emblem of their prestige, but European colonists regarded this affectation as evidence that Africans could only aspire to the outward trappings of European culture. There was no better evidence of this culture gap than

the a-rhythmic and off-key music that Europeans colonists dismissed as "noise music," but that is now honored as the source of the blue notes and poly-rhythms of African-American jazz.

An example of French colonialist music, however, is "Carnaval Y'a bon," a 1930 updating of Mayol's 1913 hit. This song references Bamboula, Boudoubadabou, and Y'a bon, all to be found in Vollard's texts, in lyrics replete with sexual double entendres:

> To make a little Carnival
> Ballad, one day Alla
> In the place where the tribes
> Dance the Bamboula
> The little negresses
> Before the king of joy
> Shout all at once
> Sou! Hou! It's Boudoubadabou!It's him in the shack of bamboo!
> Who played his mahogany flute
> At Nice where the nabobs amuse themselves
> He played a shindig.[61]

Although Bamboula was the name of a specific African drum, in a typical colonialist generalization, this term was applied to dance gatherings from the Congo to Congo Square in New Orleans.[62] Thousands of images of Africans or African Americans dancing around campfires or among thatched huts could be given the title "Bamboula." One that is explicitly titled "The Bamboula" (**fig. 20**), E.W. Kemble's illustration for "The Dance in Place Congo" in *The Century Magazine* (February 1886), is actually the least typical or, more exactly, stereotypical, in that the male dancer is neither infantilized nor demonized.

In the eighteenth century, Congo Square was the only place in New Orleans where enslaved Africans were allowed to gather, an acknowledgment that dance was an important form of cultural resistance and provided opportunities to organize political resistance as well.[63] The cakewalk, the commercial entertainment industry version of an antebellum bamboula that inspired many a racist cartoon, was a case in point. Although believed by whites to epitomize the happy indolence of blacks relaxing after a day's work on the plantation, the cakewalk was actually a classic example of the subversive masking that Ralph Ellison discussed in his 1958 essay on minstrelsy, "Change the Joke and Slip the Yoke."[64] The cakewalk's exaggerated back arching and high stepping (**fig. 21**), which whites took as confirmation that blacks were incapable of being civilized, had originated as a parody of the uppity manners of plantation owners exemplified by their minuets and the quadrilles. Enslaved Africans were able to pull off this joke, quite literally, under the upturned noses of their American masters. When French audiences applauded the cakewalk, and made fun of it in cartoons, they did not, as far as one can tell, suspect a thing.[65]

Conclusion

Rouault was, if nothing else, even-handed, creating an unrelievedly pessimistic world in which there was no room for colonialist and anti-colonialist heroes like Senghor, who founded the Ligue de Défense de la Race Nègre, or Brazza, who investigated colonial abuses in the French Congo. "Ubu Colonial" and the "Good Candidate" Malikoko were devoid of the complexities and contradictions of "French devils" like Toqué, an apparently likeable and friendly officer who claimed that he did not sanction the firecracker torture; and "African dupes" like Diagne, who is considered to be the father of Senegalese democracy. Jarry, true to the anti-naturalistic ideals of symbolist theatre, believed that the ideal actor was a puppet, and staged *Ubu Roi*, with the help of Bonnard and Terasse, at their Théâtre des Pantins (Marionette Theatre).[66] Rouault's contribution to Jarry and Vollard's texts was to transform their fictional characters into visual symbols, from the bloated Ubu to the grinning Bamboula, giving them masks expressing their essential and unchanging qualities.

Years later, after Vollard had unexpectedly died in a car accident in 1939, Rouault reflected back on the project of the 1920s: "And when the late Ambroise was upset (or seemed upset) that he had not asked me to illustrate Molière, Rabelais,

Villon or Shakespeare instead of this wretched Ubu, I answered that those he cited certainly had no need of me."[67]

Unless otherwise indicated, translations from the French for this essay were done by Anne Bernard Kearney and Simone Kearney. Their assistance is gratefully acknowledged.

ENDNOTES

1 Una E. Johnson, "Foreword," *Recollections of a Picture Dealer*, Ambroise Vollard (1936; New York: Hacker Art Books, 1987) xiv.

2 "…les événements pleins d'intérêt de l'année actuelle mais aujourd'hui totalement périmés," Ambroise Vollard, "Les problèmes coloniaux à la Société des Nations," (1919), reprinted in *Tout Ubu Colonial et autres texts*, ed. Jean-Paul Morel (Paris: Séguier, 1994) 333.

3 "M. Gouverneur devra diligemment leur fair taper dessus, voir mettre des cartouches de dynamite au cul…." Ambroise Vollard, "La Politique coloniale du Père Ubu" (1919), reprinted in *Tout Ubu Colonial* 141.

4 Qtd. in Isabel Dion's "L'affaire Gaud-Toqué," *Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza, 1852-1905*, http://www.brazza.culture.fr/fr/missions/affaire_gaud_toque.htm (Aix en Provence: Centre des archives d'outre-mer, 2005).

5 My discussion of the scandals of 1905, and of the response by members of the Paris avant-garde, is largely indebted to the path-breaking article by Patricia Leighten, '"The White Peril' and L'Art nègre: Picasso, Primitivism, and Anticolonialism," *The Art Bulletin*, 72 (December 1990): 609-630. See also Patricia Leighten, "Colonialism, l'art nègre, and les Demoiselles d'Avignon," *Picasso's Les Demoiselles d'Avignon,* ed. Christopher Green (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2001).

6 Stanley Appelbaum, *French Satirical Drawings from "L'Assiete au Beurre"* (New York: Dover Publications, 1978) v-vii.

7 Charles Péguy, preface to Félicien Challaye, "Le Congo Français," *Cahiers de la Quinzaine*, 7.12 (1906): 8. See Jean-Pierre Biondi, *Les anticolonialistes (1881-1962)* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1992) 69-73.

8 Vollard, "La Politique coloniale," *Tout Ubu Colonial* 129.

9 Letter from Georges Rouault to Auguste Marguillier, qtd. in *Rouault: première période, 1903-1920*, ed. Fabrice Hergott (Paris: Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, 1992) 188.

10 Leighten, "White Peril" 615, 618.

11 See J. P. Daughton, An *Empire Divided: Religion, Republicanism, and the Making of French Colonialism, 1880-1914* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2006) 3-24.

12 "Le grand "Q" est formé du grand "O"…qui n'est pas une lettre mère, et du petit "c", lettre mère," Alfred Jarry, "Ubu Colonial" (1901), reprinted *Tout Ubu Colonial* 104-05.

13 "Ne pas capable descendre Saint Esprit, li la fini crever!" Vollard, "Les Problèmes coloniaux," *Tout Ubu Colonial* 312. Translation author's. In his annotations, Morel transcribes dialogue into common French as "Le Saint-Esprit ne peut plus descendre, il est mort!"

14 "À vrai dire, ladite expédition coloniale consista principalement en un déjeuner dans la cave de M. Ambroise Vollard, qui nous avait conviés, ainsi que MM. Jarry, Bonnard, Terasse et Fagus, nos historiographe, peintre, musicien, et poète de prédilection, à la confection d'un almanach que nous exécutâmes au moyen d'un Petit Larousse préalablement réduit en mietes et mis dans un chapeau, et don't chacun tirait au hazard un des noms y contenus, à la manière d'un loterie.... M. Vollard racontait des histories de nègres que M. Jarry notait d'une main, pendant que de l'autre il écrivait les événements pleins d'intérêt de l'année actuelle mais aujourd'hui totalement périmés...." Vollard, "Les problèmes coloniaux," *Tout Ubu Colonial,* 332-333.

15 Nicolas Bancel, Pascal Blanchard, et and Laurent Gervereau, eds., *Images et colonies: Iconographie et propagande coloniale sur l'Afrique française de 1880 à 1962* (Paris: BDIC, ACHAC, 1993).

16 Max Jacob, *Chronique des temps héroïques* (Paris: Louis Broder, 1956) 64, qtd. and trans. in Jody Blake, *Le Tumulte noir: Modernist Art and Popular Entertainment in Jazz Age Paris, 1900-1930* (University Park: Penn State Univ. Press, 1999).

17 Marius-Ary Leblond, *Ulysse, Cafre, ou l'histoire dorée d'un noir* (Paris: Editions du France, 1924) 275-278, qtd. and trans. in Blake, *Le tumulte noir* 88.

18 Robert Aldrich, *Greater France: A History of French Oversees Expansion* (London: Macmillan, 1996) 35-60.

19 Leighten, "The White Peril" 609-630.

20 Significantly, Jarry's *Ubu roi* was revived at Théâtre de L'Oeuvre on February 17, 1922.

21 Phillipe Dewitte, *Les Mouvements nègres en France, 1919-1939* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1985); Jody Blake, "The Truth About the Colonies, 1931: *Art indigene* in Service of the Revolution," *Oxford Art Journal* 25/1 (2002): 35-58.

22 Catherine Hodeir and Michel Pierre, *L'Exposition Coloniale* (Brussels: Editions Complexe, 1991); Patricia A. Morton, *Hybrid Modernities: Architecture and Representation at the 1931 Colonial Exposition, Paris* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000).

23 Blake, "The Truth About the Colonies" 41-43.

24 Leighten "The White Peril" 621-622.

25 Aldrich 175-77.

26 Vollard, *Recollections* 4-5.

27 *Le Véritable Guide de l'Exposition Coloniale* (Paris: SRI, 1931) n.p. Translation author's.

28 Qtd. and trans. in Blake, "Truth about the Colonies" 45.

29 Qtd. and trans. in Blake, "Truth about the Colonies" 42.

30 Qtd. and trans. in Blake, "Truth about the Colonies" 37.

31 Jack J. Spector, *Surrealist Art and Writing, 1919-1939: The Gold of Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 70-94.

32 Qtd. and trans. in Blake *Tumulte noir* 88.

33 Dewitte 68-81. Tyler Stovall, *Paris Noir: African Americans in the City of Light* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1996) 32.

34 Qtd. and trans. in Blake, "Truth about the Colonies" 51.

35 Qtd. in Michael Crowder, *Colonial West Africa* (London: Routledge, 1978) 105.

36 See Gary Wilder, "Panafricanism and the Republican Political Sphere," *The Color of Liberty: Histories of Race in France,* eds. Tyler Stovall and Sue Peabody (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2003) 238-244.

37 Vollard, "Politique Coloniale," *Tout Ubu Colonial* 135.

38 An exception among art historians is Leighten, "White Peril," whose discussion, however, is limited to "Ubu Colonial" in *Almanach du Père Ubu* of 1901. Morel's annotations throughout *Tout Ubu* are invaluable in contextualizing Vollard's texts.

39 Jack D. Flam, "Matisse and the Fauves," *"Primitivism" in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern,* ed. William Rubin, 2 vols. (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1984) I: 211-239.

40 See Flam 214; and Jean-Louis Paudrat, "From Africa," *"Primitivism" in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern,* ed. William Rubin (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1984) I:141. Note in particular the characterization of the large eyes and open mouth as well as the negative spaces between the limbs and the torso.

41 Jean-Paul Morel, "Ambroise Vollard/Georges Rouault: deux 'solitaires égarés dans la jungle,'" *Georges Rouault, forme, couleur, harmonie,* catalogue published for the Musée d'art moderne et contemporain de Strasbourg exhibition, 10 November 2006 to 18 March 2007, commissariat Fabrice Hergott (Strasbourg: Musées de Strasbourg, 2006) 141-146.

42 Blake, *Le Tumulte noir* 89.

43 Pierre Biondi, *Les anticolonialistes* 31, 33, 58, 71.

44 Léon Bloy, *Le Sang du pauvre* (Paris: 1909; reprint, Paris: Éditions de la Bibliothèque mondiale, 1956) 117.

45 Auguste Roubille, "La Pologne sera heureuse," *L'Assiette au Beurre* 251 (January 20, 1906).

46 *Rouault Première Periode*; Fabrice Hergott and Sarah Whitfield, *Georges Rouault: The Early Years,*

1903-1920 (London: Royal Academy of Arts in association with Lund Humphries, 1993); Rebecca A. Rabinow, "Vollard and Rouault" and "Vollard's Livres d'Artiste," *Cézanne to Picasso: Ambroise Vollard, Patron of the Avant-Garde*, ed. Rebecca A. Rabinow, exhibition catalogue, The Metropolitan Museum of Art New York (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006) 162-170; 197-216.

47 Martine Astier Loutfi, *Littérature et colonialisme: L'Expansion coloniale vue dans la littérature romanesque française, 1871-1914* (Paris: Mouton, 1971).

48 Extract from an unpublished draft preface to the *Miserere*, dated August 1947, in the Rouault Archive, qtd. in François Chapon and Isabelle Rouault, *Rouault: œuvre gravé*, 2 vols. (Monte-Carlo: Éditions André Sauret, 1978) 1: 25.

49 See, for example, Rabinow, "Vollard and Rouault" 116.

50 Letter from André Suarès to Georges Rouault, September 20, 1919, qtd. in Morel, "Ambroise Vollard/ Georges Rouault" 142 n7.

51 Rouault, open letter to André Warnod, published in *Comoedia*, 3 January 1926, qtd. in Morel, "Ambroise Vollard/Georges Rouault" 142, n7.

52 Abigail Solomon-Godeau, "Going Native," *Art in America* 77 (July 1989): 118-129, 161.

53 Paul Gauguin, *Les Guêpes*, 12 January 1900, qtd. in Daughton, An *Empire Divided* 154.

54 Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Objects of Ethnograhy," *Exhibiting Cultures: Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, eds. Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991) 386-443; *Annie E. Coombes, Reinventing Africa: Museums, Material Culture, and Popular Imagination in Late Victorian and Edwardian England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

55 Leighten "White Peril" 625, 629.

56 André Salmon, "Hier dans aujourd'hui," *L'Art Vivant* (Paris: Editions du Crès et Cie, 1920), qtd. in *Rouault Première Periode* 218.

57 "est d'être chantre à l'église métropolitaine, et en outre sous-préfet en service extraordinaire avec la plume noire au chapeau nous donnant rang de general de brigade." Vollard, "Problèmes coloniaux," *Tout Ubu Colonial,* 303.

58 "notre ruineuse exploration coloniale aux frais du gouvernement français," Alfred Jarry, "Ubu Colonial," *Almanach illustré du Père Ubu* (1901), reprinted in Vollard, *Tout Ubu Colonial* 85.

59 Georges Toqué, *Les Massacres du Congo: La terre qui ment, la terre qui brûle* (1907; reprint, Paris: L'Harmattan, 1996).

60 Arthur de Gobineau, *L'Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines,* 4th ed. (Paris: 1900), qtd. and trans. in Blake, *Tumulte noir* 25.

61 For numerous variants on these themes, see Josette and Claude Liauzu, *Quand on chantait les colonies* (Paris: Syllepse, 2002).

62 It is significant that Vollard, "Politique coloniale," *Tout Ubu Colonial* 139, identified Bamboula as the national dance of the Republic of Liberia, a problematic "colony" founded as an African homeland for freed slaves from America, which gained its independence in 1847.

63 George W. Cable, "Creole Slave Dances: The Dance in Place Congo" *The Century* 31.4 (February 1886) 517-32; Lynn Fauley Emery, *Black Dance from 1619 to Today*, 2nd ed. (Princeton, NJ: Dance Horizons, 1988) 154-166.

64 Ralph Ellison, "Change the Joke and Slip the Yoke," *The Collected Essays of Ralph Ellison,* ed. John F. Callahan (New York: Modern Library, 1995) 100-112.

65 Brooke Baldwin, "The Cakewalk: A Study in Steoretype and Reality," *Journal of Social History* 15 (Winter 1981) 205-218. *L'Assiette au Beurre* 206 (11 March 1905) devoted a special issue, "Les bourreaux des noirs," to colonial crimes in Africa and racial violence in the United States. The cover illustration, by Adolphe Willette, depicting an African American couple and their baby fleeing gunshots, gave ironic meaning to the high stepping of "Le Joyeux Cake-Walk."

66 Patricia Eckert Boyer, *Artists and the Avant-Garde Theater in Paris 1887-1900* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1998) 144-145.

67 Qtd. in *Rouault Oeuvre Gravé* 25, 64.

Technique and Space in the *Miserere*

John McCoy

To fully appreciate the physical, tactile qualities of *Miserere* as an object it is necessary to see it presented in its folio. The prints were published in a substantial fabric, board, and brass binder (20 1/2 x 27 1/2 x 4 inches) which, when weighed down by the prints, is no small matter to negotiate. Simply unfolding the portfolio requires a great deal of space; once open, several preliminary pages of letterpress text on heavy Reeves paper preface the actual prints. The effect upon the viewer is to pace his progress through the folio; each page must be weighed and turned by hand, emphasizing the object-ness of the work. Once the prints are reached, each is presented in a folded page of the same heavy paper, each with a letterpress epigrammatic title to introduce the picture within. The viewer must first consider the words before turning his gaze to the print. This highly deliberate program of Rouault's creates a conversation between text and art. The title is posed almost as a riddle, with the print itself the explanation to be read: the verbal is answered by the visual through the medium of paper and ink.

Printmaking requires a high degree of premeditation on the part of the artist. Even when the goal is spontaneity of gesture and freeness of composition, the artist must achieve his effect through a laborious, incremental process that requires both precision and calculation. The play between free expression on the one hand and meticulous execution on the other marks all of Rouault's graphic output, but is especially visible in his work on *Miserere* (executed 1916-1927, published in 1948). While Rouault often relied upon other artisans to execute his prints from his designs—in particular his wood-engravings and his color aquatints—the plates of *Miserere* were prepared by Rouault alone, making the series an open window into his process. In addition to the evidence of the published work, preliminary states of all the prints of *Miserere* survive, further clarifying the campaigns of Rouault's meticulous technique. Examination of his process not only helps to develop an appreciation for the sheer amount of work and skill involved, but also reveals how Rouault used technique and style in service to subject, producing works whose surface physicality creates a spiritual space in which the viewer's mind focuses upon intangible truths.

The process of Intaglio printing is complex, and this essay will not seek to act as a primer[1]; however, a brief description will help. Intaglio printing refers to a family of printmaking techniques in which the design to be printed is recessed into a plate (usually a thin sheet of copper). Having prepared the plate, the artist then works the ink into the design by hand and buffs the areas not to be printed clean of ink. The inked

plate is placed against the paper which will receive the image; this paper has been soaked in water to increase its elasticity. To achieve sufficient transfer of ink and a consistent run of prints, the process requires extreme pressure between plate and paper, which are fed between two metal cylinders whose combined force can add up to a pressure of over 40,000 pounds per square inch.

The incision of the design onto the plate may be accomplished in many ways, each of which produces different effects. Rouault combined many of these methods, but his primary mode was etching: the use of baths of acid to bite into the surface of the plate. The areas of the plate not to be etched are protected with an acid-resistant layer, typically rosin (an opaque form of resin derived from pine trees); the artist scratches, incises, or lifts away sections of this layer where he wants the acid to bite. More specifically, Rouault mostly used a subset of etching called aquatint, in which the rosin is applied in a fine powder and melted to the plate. The acid then will etch in the tiny spaces between the motes of rosin, creating a matrix of indentations that produce characteristically deep and textured blacks and grays in the final print.

An additional subset of etching is the technique called sugarlift, which allows the printmaker to paint the design freely on the plate with a brush as a painter would paint directly onto paper. A mixture of sugar and water is used instead of paint. Then the artist applies rosin to the unbrushed area. The sugar and water wash away, leaving a negative area of exposed plate, which is then treated using the aquatint technique.

This complicated process requires chemical and mechanical expertise as well as the ability to plan many steps ahead—and in reverse. For any printmaker such work is painstaking; for Rouault it became an obsession. In his introduction to *Miserere*—published with the series—Rouault described his methodology:

> [The images] were originally drawn in India ink, and later, in response to Ambrose Vollard's persuasion, transformed into paintings. Vollard then had them

Figs. 1a and b: "Ne sommes-nous pas forçats?" *Miserere* plate VI, first state (left) and final, published state (right). Fondation Georges Rouault.

Figs. 2a and b: "Miserere mei, Deus, secundum magnam misericordiam tuam." *Miserere* plate I, full image (left) and detail, showing technique (right).

> photoengraved on copper plates. Starting from these, I have attempted, with no little toil, to preserve the rhythm of the original designs. I worked unceasingly on each plate, with varying success, using many different tools. There is no secret. Unsatisfied, I reworked each plate, sometimes making as many as 12 to 15 successive states.[2]

As Rouault notes, the initial transfer of image to plate was achieved through photoengraving, called *photograveur* in French. A process dating to the early days of photography, photoengraving employs light-sensitive materials to act as the ground on the plate. Because these materials are applied in a fine matrix, photoengraving is a subset of aquatint. This technique preserves much of the freshness of the original drawings; however, it is also characterized by a regularity of grain lacking the depth and complexity of hand-worked aquatint. Comparing the first state of a print such as "Ne somme-nous pas forçats?" to its final state, the anemic tonal quality of the photoengraving is quite evident (**figs. 1a, 1b**). The overall value is monotonous; the tones are mottled rather than modulated. Through the course of several campaigns of etching, burnishing, and drypoint, Rouault painstakingly worked to more delicately grade the tones, brighten the highlights, and deepen and add texture to the blacks. The result is a play of light and dark which has little to do with the traditional illusionistic effects of *chiaroscuro*, but instead imbues his static, statuesque compositions with vibrant energy—an energy which exists not so much as an animating force for the figures as it is a shimmering light that radiates from the surface of the print.

Close examination of the first plate, "Miserere mei, Deus, secundum magnam misericordiam tuam," reveals the order of Rouault's techniques. In the lower left quadrant, several are easily discerned. The flat, thin gray washes between the figures show the original photoengraving. Contrasting this are the more velvety black lines of brushwork that heavily outline the figures and suggest several applications of sugarlift. In the lines of Christ's shoulder, chin, and facial features, the

brushwork overlaps to create different intensities of black. Because the ink in these passages lies thickly on the paper, these sections have a glossy sheen resembling a varnish not visible in the reproductions in this catalogue.

The ray-like strokes which border the arc above Christ's head exhibit a much coarser matrix of black and white than do the strokes which line the frame below, showing different densities of the application of rosin dust. To achieve these gradations of tone, Rouault used only his manual skill with the duster. There are, however, additional passages in which the texture is provided by mechanical means: In the front of Christ's neck in several places the even rows of tiny dots were produced with a mezzotint rocker—a hand tool with an array of tiny needle-like points which the artist can rock back and forth to create a regular pattern.

One somewhat paradoxical effect of Rouault's technique is to flatten his figures so that they conform to the picture plane while at the same time creating a feeling of depth in the negative space surrounding them. This sense of profundity is a product of the rich blacks which characterize aquatint and which Rouault took great pains to deepen through revision. It is not a perspectival attempt to produce the illusion of space; rather it is the depth of texture and tone. The shading Rouault gives to his figures is not *chiaroscuro*; there is no light source and the tones produce no volume. In their flatness it recalls Romanesque rather than Renaissance models. Rouault's drawing and painting style is frequently compared to stained glass owing to the heaviness of his ubiquitous contour lines. When he was fourteen, Rouault apprenticed to a restorer of stained glass, and so biographically the association is appealing. Rouault himself seemed to encourage the comparison when asked. "I have been told before that my painting reminded people of stained glass. That's probably because of my original trade …[which] inspired me with an enduring passion for old stained glass."[3] But where the lead cames, which form the joins between pieces of stained glass, tend to be regular, rigid, and geometric, Rouault's heavy outlines are calligraphic, intuitive, and expressive.

But if stylistically Rouault's technique is only incidentally connected to stained glass, his spiritual connection to the artisans of the Middle Ages is clearly evident. Rouault thought of himself with pride as a craftsman, writing, "Is it not better to be a good craftsman than a mediocre artist?"[4] The rich, complex texture of the photogravure, aquatint, and drypoint combination all emphasize the role of craft in his art. They are also features best appreciated at close viewing. Compositionally, a case can be made that Rouault's work mimics the arrangement of medieval sources, as Anne Davenport does in her essay in this catalogue. Viewed this way, *Miserere* is an illuminated manuscript or even a cycle of icons: beautiful objects for directing and maintaining the viewer's attention upon spiritual truths—specifically, through viewing the works close-up and turning the pages by hand. Gael Mooney's and Stephen Schloesser's essay in this catalogue contextualizes Rouault's compositions as hieratic, a style derived from Romanesque and Egyptian sources, whose dignified, highly formalized rules of posing the figure were seen as particularly appropriate for sacred subjects.

But in spite of his spiritual debt to medieval and even ancient artisans, Rouault was also a modernist. As Virginia Reinburg notes in her essay, he was greatly indebted to the early-modern period of post-Gutenburg printmaking.[5] His work can also be seen as partaking in the modernist trend toward flattening the picture plane and acknowledging the reality of the materials that constitute the art object. The act of creation is captured in the mottled, textured surface of the print, and the viewers' pleasure comes in no small part from dwelling on the visual evidence of process, even if they are unfamiliar with the techniques employed.

Both Rouault's devotion to craft and his habit of working out his prints sequentially through a combination of techniques and myriad impressions recall the work of one of the heroes of Modernism, his near contemporary Edgar Degas. Rouault was acquainted with Degas in his later years and discussed the elder artist's work with him. But while Degas and Rouault shared a similar approach to

etching, their attitudes to subject were quite different. For Degas, the ostensible subjects of his prints, be they dancers or prostitutes, were the vehicle through which he experimented with style and form. Degas's repeated workings of his plates were analytic and abstracting, rendering his figures into elements of design. But for Rouault his subjects were of the ultimate importance. Or rather, what his subjects indicated. The Symbolist believed that Truth could only be pointed to indirectly, that depictions were "perceivable surfaces intended to represent their esoteric affinities with primordial Ideals."[6] To reach spiritual truths, the language of material objects is required. In the *Miserere* this game of surfaces pointing to ideas plays out again and again: word to image, flatness to depth, ink and paper to the Divine.

Endnotes

1 For a more technical discussion of Rouault's methods, see Delores DeStefano. "Never Satisfied: The Making of Miserere et Guerre," *Miserere et Guerre*, ed. Holly Flora and Soo Yun Kang (New York: Museum of Biblical Art, 2006) 19-24.

2 The original introduction was published as part of the printed folio. This English translation is from Georges Roualt, "Artist's Preface," *Miserere*, trans. C. F. MacIntyre. (London: Trianon Press, 1951).

3 Ambroise Vollard, *Recollections of a Picture Dealer* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1936) 213-214. Qtd. and trans. in James Thrall Soby, *George Rouault, Paintings and Prints* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1945).

4 Georges Rouault, *Solilogues* (Neuchâtel, 1944) 104. Qtd. in William A. Dyrness, *Rouault: A Vision of Suffering and Salvation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Willam B Eerdmans, 1971).

5 Stephen Schloesser has pointed out in discussion how *Miserere* imitates emblem books of the 16th and 17th centuries in its interplay between maxims, images, and poems.

6 Jean Moréas, "Manifeste du Symbolisme," *Le Figaro*, 18 September 1886. My translation.

PART IV: 1929–1939

1929–1939: Mystic Masque, Hieratic Harmony

Stephen Schloesser

For he's the super realist...
a little charleychaplin man
    who may or may not catch
her fair eternal form
    spreadeagled in the empty air
of existence[1]

I. 1929–1931: A Turning of the Tide—*en marge des doctrines*

In retrospective memory, the stock market crash of October 24, 1929, would come to stand symbolically for the day the Great Depression began. It would take two years for the crash's effects to impact France severely. When it did, the "postwar" decade was definitively finished. It turned into the 1930s, the decade of clashing ideologies—liberalism, fascism, and communism—and soon enough became the "interwar" decade as another conflagration loomed. This sea change in epochs and tonalities coincided with a turning of the tide in critical and popular reception of Rouault's work. In his fifty-eighth and fifty-ninth years, as Rouault returned to painting, his presence began to be felt in previously foreign territory. In 1930, Rouault saw simultaneous exhibitions abroad in New York, Chicago, London, and Munich, all garnering enthusiastic reviews.[2] The title of one stands out in particular for pointing to the coming hieratic quality of Rouault's 1930s works: "A Medieval Modern," published in the *New Freeman* on May 24, 1930.

In addition to the remarkable shift in fortunes vis-à-vis exhibitions and reviews, three projects of 1929-1930 in particular suggest Rouault's growing visibility. The first was his participation in the "Portraits of Maria Lani" collaboration, spearheaded by Jean Cocteau and others (discussed above[3]). Rouault's *Maria Lani* was one of fifty-one representations of the singer-actress gathered together into a traveling exhibition. The Berlin catalog put Rouault's illustration on its cover (**fig. 1**). The New York venue, coming just one month after the October stock market crash, was the Brummer Gallery (where Rouault's works would be exhibited in 1930).[4] *Time* magazine reported the event:

Is she beautiful? Is she thin, fat, dropsical, anemic, senile, kittenish or reptilian? Last week Manhattanites asked these questions about Maria Lani, French cinemactress. For in the august

Fig. 1. Exhibition catalogue for *Maria Lani* (Berlin: Galerie Alfred Flechtheim, 1930). Rouault's *Maria Lani* is featured on the front cover with inscription, "*A l'oiseau bleu crève les yeux il chantera mieux.*"

Brummer Gallery was an exhibition of 51 representations of this one woman. She was 'done' in marble, metal, paint, on a platter, on a piece of glass.

There were 47 works by French painters and sculptors, two by French poets, one by a dressmaker. With the exception of Pablo Picasso, almost every famed name in modern French painting was represented. Henri Matisse saw Lani in three lines, Andre Derain painted her very swarthily, Haim Soutine as a Spectre. One painter gave her 14 eyes, another seven, another one. She was seen as a machine, as a horned toad, as a Negress. Galleryman Brummer shrewdly put no photographs of her on exhibition...[5]

Fig. 2. Photograph of the Ballets Russes production of *Le Fils prodigue* (*The Prodigal Son*), 1929, scenery and costumes by Georges Rouault. Photo courtesy of Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris

In 1929, Rouault also created the costume designs and stage set for the Ballets Russes production of *The Prodigal Son*, first performed at the Théâtre Sarah-Bernhardt in Paris on May 21, 1929. The last ballet produced by Serge Diaghilev before his unexpected death in August 1929, it was choreographed by George Balanchine and set to music by Sergei Prokofiev.[6] Reviews of Rouault's sets were generally positive: "The glowing colours of M. Rouault's décor, which are caught in the velvets of the costumes, provide a fine spectacle."[7] But Francis Poulenc's less favorable critique (expressing, he claimed, Prokofiev's private opinion), suggests the impact of Rouault's just-completed work on the fantastical world of the *Réincarnations du Père Ubu*:

Figs. 3a and 3b. Florence and Venice, postcards, Rouault's personal collection. Photo courtesy Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris.

Figs. 4a and 4b. Dancers, press-clippings, Rouault's personal collection. Photo courtesy Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris.

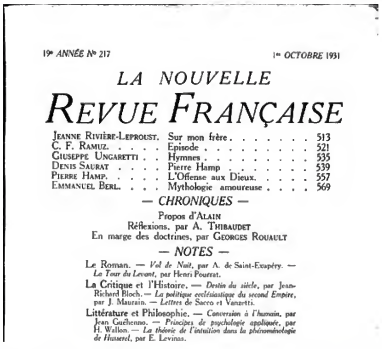
"And that side...what shall I say? That Palestinian side to Rouault's scenery, perhaps rather in the vein of 'twilight on the Bosphorous.'"[8] In the design for the backcloth for scenes one and three ("Home"), Rouault's trademark tower topped off with the glowing rounded ball (often red, here orange) stands at the end of a long narrow road[9] (**fig. 2**). The landscape layout echoes that in the *Réincarnations du Père Ubu*, *Paysage tropical* (1928, **no. 28d**) in which native figures seem to dance as they walk along the road; one of the *Illustrations* from *Carnets de Gilbert* (1931, **nos. 35a-d**); the *Paysage à la tour* (1938) from *Fleurs du mal* (1938, **no. 46l**); and *Rencontre* from *Passion* (1936, **no. 47m**).

Rouault's fondness for the vertical thrusts provided by towers emerging from urban landscapes is demonstrated not only by numerous postcards and press clippings of such towers (including those from Florence and Venice, **figs. 3a, b**), but also by similar clippings from dance magazines (**figs. 4a, b**). He wrote about his experience of watching the Ballets Russes: "I saw the whole ballet troupe in movement: friezes, bas-reliefs, facades, compositions inscribed in space. The mind was carried far away from a physical spectacle. The bodies swayed to the cadence of collective rhythmic movements—verticals of high-rising flame or long horizontal rhythms. What joy that was for an artist!"[10]

A third project in 1929-1930 to which Rouault devoted a good deal of time was the painting of approximately one hundred gouaches for a pictorial film project tentatively entitled *Popular Images*.[11] The film was to have four parts, the last two bearing the titles of questions echoing the epistemological instability which had by now solidified into a firm worldview: *Qui donc se connaît?* (Who then knows himself?, the projected Part III); and *Qui ne se grime pas?* (Who does not wear a mask?, the projected Part IV). Among the various preparatory paintings were works bearing titles like *Who does not wear a mask?* (four variations); *Who does not betray?*; *Who is good?*; *Just?*; *Cordial to his brother in misery?*; *...to the poor or to the orphan?*; *Who will never be cruel in his dried up heart?*; and so on. Although the project was never realized, the proposed titles demonstrate the centrality of Rouault's interest in the problem of self-knowledge and the ubiquity of self-deception.

There is probably no more important work in which Rouault summed up the problem of self-interrogation than in *Qui ne se grime pas?*, post-1930, **no. 40**).[12] In the painted variant of the *Miserere* plate discussed above[13] (**no. 27g**), Rouault poignantly uses the figure of the Pierrot (**fig. 5**)

Fig. 5. Pierrot, photograph, Rouault's personal collection. Photo courtesy Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris.


19e ANNÉE N° 217 — 1er OCTOBRE 1931

LA NOUVELLE
REVUE FRANÇAISE

JEANNE RIVIÈRE-LEPROUST. Sur mon frère 513
C. F. RAMUZ. . . . . Episode 521
GIUSEPPE UNGARETTI . . Hymnes 535
DENIS SAURAT . . . . Pierre Hamp 539
PIERRE HAMP. . . . . L'Offense aux Dieux. 557
EMMANUEL BERL. . . . Mythologie amoureuse 569

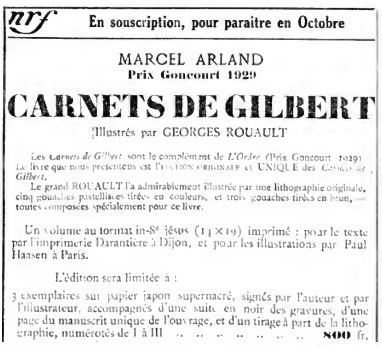
— CHRONIQUES —

Propos d'ALAIN
Réflexions. par A. THIBAUDET
En marge des doctrines, par GEORGES ROUAULT

— NOTES —

Le Roman. — *Vol de Nuit*, par A. de Saint-Exupéry. — *La Tour du Levant*, par Henri Pourrat.
La Critique et l'Histoire. — *Destin du siècle*, par Jean-Richard Bloch. — *La politique ecclésiastique du second Empire*, par J. Maurain. — *Lettres de Sacco et Vanzetti*.
Littérature et Philosophie. — *Conversion à l'humain*, par Jean Guéhenno. — *Principes de psychologie appliquée*, par H. Wallon. — *La théorie de l'intuition dans la phénoménologie de Husserl*, par E. Levinas.

Fig. 6a. Cover, *Nouvelle Revue Française* 19/217(October 1, 1931). See Rouault, "En marge des doctrines."


nrf — En souscription, pour paraître en Octobre

MARCEL ARLAND
Prix Goncourt 1929

CARNETS DE GILBERT

Illustrés par GEORGES ROUAULT

Les *Carnets de Gilbert* sont le complément de *L'Ordre* (Prix Goncourt 1929). Le livre que nous présentons est l'ÉDITION ORIGINALE et UNIQUE des *Carnets de Gilbert*.

Le grand ROUAULT l'a admirablement illustrée par une lithographie originale, cinq gouaches pastellisées tirées en couleurs, et trois gouaches tirées en brun, — toutes composées spécialement pour ce livre.

Un volume au format in-8° jésus (14 × 19) imprimé : pour le texte par l'imprimerie Darantiere à Dijon, et pour les illustrations par Paul Hansen à Paris.

L'édition sera limitée à :

3 exemplaires sur papier japon supernacré, signés par l'auteur et par l'illustrateur, accompagnés d'une suite en noir des gravures, d'une page du manuscrit unique de l'ouvrage, et d'un tirage à part de la lithographie, numérotés de 1 à III . . . . . 800 fr.

Fig. 6b. Advertisement for Marcel Arland, *Carnets de Gilbert*, in *NRF* (October 1, 1931).

to pose the central question about semblance and reality. The figure of the sad or tragic clown has a long trajectory, but Rouault has endowed the figure with a quasi-sacred or mystical status by portraying it hieratically, framed within a stained glass window. Even the bi-polarity of the medieval color scheme—red for divinity, blue for humanity, found in both western stained glass and in eastern iconography—has been preserved here, although it has been transmuted into blue and pink pastels. (For similar pastels, see *Christ et docteur* [1937, **no. 53**], *Le Clown blessé* [1939, **no. 62**], and *Nu au miroir* [1939, **no. 56**]). Finally, the bisecting horizontal of the window imitates not only the lead frame holding stained-glass in place but also—and more importantly—the red balance bar which makes its entry into Rouault's work most apparently in the *Cirque* (1929-30), to be discussed shortly. Although the clown may be sad, tragic, questioning, anxious, or all of these together, he is set within this hieratic framework that elevates him into another world of harmony, order, and stability.

In May 1931, Rouault celebrated his sixtieth birthday. In October, Marcel Arland's *Carnets de Gilbert* (Gilbert's notebooks, 1931, **nos. 35a-d**) was published. The four colored copperplate engravings that Rouault produced for Arland's text show the remarkable burst in coloration that would mark all of his work—in oil, watercolor, and graphics—throughout the 1930s.[14] Their exuberance might also reflect his newly acquired success, which was owed in large part to his increasingly popular reception in the United States. Rouault was conflicted about this ambivalent fact, as he wrote Georges Chabot later that year: "I often had the impression that in the country of Breughel, of Rubens, and not far from Rembrandt, they would be able to understand me. And yet it is Uncle Sam who celebrates me. It is a bitter irony."[15]

An advertisement for Arland's *Carnets* appeared in the October 1, 1931, issue of the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, the same volume in which Rouault's essay "En marge des doctrines" [On the margins of doctrines] was published, both a personal consolidation of his past and a bold manifesto for the future (**figs. 6a, 6b**).[16] In it, Rouault situates himself within a long genealogy of tradition. "I love the old Masters," he writes. "Before Poussin became fashionable," Rouault made "long visits to the Louvre with the good Gustave Moreau" and had long discussions, sometimes four nights a week, about "the old Masters." But Rouault then traces his genealogy back even further to the symbolic centers of the Middle Ages, preparing the way for his hieratic works of the 1930s: "Being myself a native of the Île de France, I know well that Versailles is not the only capital, and that in order to arrive at Paris, one is able to pass through Chartres or Rheims ...." Concluding with remarks on the "mediocrity" that satisfies "the majority of our

contemporaries" who have no desire for an effort that would be "truly freer in spirit" (*plus libre vraiment en esprit*), Rouault contrasts the "decorative liberty" (*cette liberté décorative*) chosen by most in his day with "the most beautiful of liberties" (*la plus belle des libertés*)—i.e., the return to formal structures that make free improvisations possible. Rouault ends by saying one can offer such comments if they exist "On the margin not only of doctrines, but of works (*En marge non seulement des doctrines, mais des oeuvres*) ...."[17] This important text, which sets the stage for Rouault's highly formalized hieratic representations of the 1930s, reminds the reader of how much the artist resonated with the neoclassical currents of his time. As Stravinsky said to his Harvard audience in 1939 (speaking in French): "*La variété ne vaut que comme poursuite de la similitude.*"[18] Variety is worthwhile only in pursuit of similitude.

II. 1929-1930: *Cirque*: Anchoring the Masters of Disequilibrium

At the end of the decade, Rouault collaborated with André Suarès on a projected folio book entitled *Cirque*, intended for publication by Vollard in 1931.[19] Suarès's text ended up being extraordinarily political, unexpectedly fierce, virulently anti-American and anti-bourgeois. Vollard decided that it would be imprudent to publish, and the collaborative project was abandoned. As a consequence, 270 copies of the eight aquatints intended for *Cirque* (1930, **nos. 38a-h**) were printed, stored under Vollard's control, never collected into a folio and never published as a unit. (After Vollard's death, they went separate and unknown ways.[20]) The present exhibition's display of these eight *Cirque* pieces as a unit offers a rare opportunity for the viewer to see the evolution of Rouault's style. They exhibit elements extrapolated from the elongated bodies found in the *Ubu* drawings of the 1920s—compare, for example, *Bamboula* (1928, **no. 28c**) with *Le Jongleur* (1930, **no. 38c**); and *Paysage tropical* (1928, **no. 28d**), *Frontispièce* (1928, **no. 28a**), and *Incantation* (1928, **no. 28b**) with *Le clown jaune* (1929-30, **nos. 33** and **38f**) and *Parade* (ca. 1930, **no. 38b**). As Pompidou curator Angela Lampe suggests, photographs recently discovered in the Rouault archives demonstrate that another source for Rouault's elongated bodies at this time was ancient Egyptian statuary and painting found in the Louvre.[21]

As a counterpoint to these extended bodies in motion, Rouault introduced the red balance bar that would become a frequent fixture in works throughout the 1930s. Appearing at just this moment—i.e., Rouault's passing into his sixth decade—the addition of the red bar provokes a question: Did Rouault intend a broader meaning by the introduction of this device for holding one's balance? Angela Lampe underscores the importance of this red bar as it appears in many "unfinished" works from the 1930s and 1940s:

> We also discern the omnipresence of a red bar which, in a large number of unfinished works and several finished paintings, attaches the central figures to the borders of the picture, as if (as in the case of stained-glass windows) it was necessary to set them within a lead framework to protect them from the pressure of wind.... Apparently, Rouault sought to give an anchor to the persons who, because of their metier, are the masters of disequilibrium...this red bar derives in an evident manner from the representation of Christ on the cross. We might thus ask ourselves if this bar in the window frame does not result from a moral intention of the artist to come to the aid of persons threatened by falling? Put another way: the importance that Rouault gives to equilibrium, to harmony, to solidity—is it not also inscribed within his Christian faith, in his professed religiosity? Is Rouault a religious painter not only because of the choice of his biblical motifs, but also because of their formal layout?[22]

To Rouault's creative imagination, in the 1930 *Cirque*, the balance bar of the ballerina, the yellow clown, the clown and child, and the old clown echo the horizontal bar of Christ's cross as seen in the contemporaneous *Carnets de Gilbert* (1931, **nos.**

35a-d).[23] A psychological linkage between the two might also be discerned. As Rouault wrote in a letter to Suarès dated December 5, 1930:

> Atlas bearing the world on his shoulder is but a child compared to me thanks to that A. Vollard… It is killing me… I have added things up… 448 compositions of which only 80 have been delivered. What of the future?[24]

Now that Rouault had returned to painting, the price of success was Vollard's ever-increasing demands on Rouault to produce commissioned works. It is not only Atlas who must balance the weight of the world on his shoulders. In Rouault's world, artists, clowns, and Christ must do the same.

Two preparatory oil studies for this abandoned collaboration are also in the present exhibition: *Le clown jaune* and *Le vieux clown* (both 1929-30, **nos. 33** and **34**). The two figures allow us to juxtapose a young clown and an old clown. With his elongated body and graceful poses, the young clown ("the Yellow Clown") is at the height of his youthful elasticity, charming the crowds with his toned elegance. The balance he maintains in this daring contrapposto is symbolized by the red bar, which intersects his body exactly at the taut abdominal muscles. In sharp contrast, the "old clown" stands out apart from all the other youthful figures in the troupe. Slightly corpulent and seemingly fatigued, he sits upright; the red bar intersects his body, too, forming the horizontal outline of the object on which he is seated. The "Old Clown" calls to mind the "Old Saltimbanque" of Baudelaire and the old clown Rouault saw in the broken-down caravan in 1905. The contrast between him and the rest of the troupe evokes Baudelaire's lines: "And, turning around, obsessed by that vision, I tried to analyze my sudden sorrow, and I told myself: I have just seen the image of...the old poet without friends, without family, without children, debased by his wretchedness and the public's ingratitude, and whose booth the forgetful world no longer wants to enter!"[25]

Rouault painted the "old clown" at the age of fifty-eight or fifty-nine, just before the popular and critical tide was about to turn in his favor. Painfully aware of both "wretchedness and the public's ingratitude," he had experiential knowledge of Pascal's existential vision as he entered his senior years:

> We float on a vast ocean, ever uncertain and adrift, blown this way or that (*toujours incertains et flottants, poussés d'un bout vers l'autre*). Whenever we think we have some point to which we can cling and fasten ourselves, it shakes free and leaves us behind (*il branle, et nous quitte*). And if we follow it, it eludes our grasp, slides away and escapes forever (*il échappe à nos prises, nous glisse et fuit d'une fuite éternelle*). Nothing stays still for us. This is our natural condition and yet the one farthest from our inclination. We burn with desire to find firm ground and an ultimate secure base on which to build a tower reaching up to the infinite. But our whole foundation cracks, and the earth opens up into abysses (*et la terre s'ouvre jusqu'aux abîmes*).
>
> Let us, therefore, not seek certainty and stability. Our reason is always deceived by inconstant appearances (*toujours déçue par l'inconstance des apparences*); nothing can affix the finite between the two infinites that both enclose and escape it (*les deux infinis qui l'enferment et le fuient*).[26]

In 1929-1930, Rouault's circus figures bear their burden, risking all certainty and stability for the sake of entertaining others. And yet, the balance bar has been introduced, a reminder of the burning desire to find solid ground even as the whole groundwork cracks—a most fitting metaphor for the world after October 1929.

III. 1933-1939: Unbearable Lightness, Shocking Stillness

Rouault's *La Sainte Face* (1933, **no. 41**) stands out as one of his major works. Because it is too easy to take this image and file it under a ready-made category without much further consideration, it seems worthwhile recalling the importance of that year—1933.

On February 27, 1933, the German Reichstag building was mysteriously set on fire. On March 4, Franklin Delano Roosevelt was inaugurated as President, proclaiming in his speech his "firm belief that the only thing we have to fear…is fear itself…nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance." The following day, March 5, German elections gave the Nazis and their allies a majority of 52 percent. The Enabling Act, passed on March 23, gave Hitler the right to rule by decree. Following this ominous event, the years that W. H. Auden would later dub a "low dishonest decade,"[27] continued to unfold in increasingly frightening ways. The Nuremberg laws of 1935 foreshadowed the Holocaust. The Spanish Civil War that broke out in 1936 served as a dress rehearsal for the Second World War, providing a stage on which fascism and communism, personified in Hitler, Benito Mussolini, and Josef Stalin, could act out their murderous oppositions. The German fire-bombing of Guernica on April 26, 1937, immediately immortalized by Picasso, provided an eerie foretaste of the urban terror that would be unleashed on London, Dresden, Hamburg, Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and elsewhere.[28] That same year, the Japanese invasion of China resulted in the deaths of 350,000 and the rape of 100,000 women in Nanjing. The 1938 Munich agreement was soon followed by Germany's invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, igniting the Second World War.

Terrifying in themselves, these events foreshadowed even greater catastrophes. It is small wonder that a recent monumental exhibition, dedicated to the dizzying array of artistic styles erupting during this period, named the epoch *Années 30 en Europe: le temps menaçant*—1930s in Europe: The Threatening Time—years repeatedly punctuated by intimations of horrors to come.[29] Rouault himself was profoundly aware of the world around him, asking himself in a letter to Suarès whether the "Ancients" could have been "as stupid" (*aussi bêtes*) as the present time: "I sometimes ask myself, because *the rising ocean tide of human imbecility* (without too much pride in saying it and without believing oneself to be a superman [*surhomme*]) seems to carry away everything moment by moment (emphasis in original)."[30] Writing this in August 1932, Rouault could not yet imagine the ominous turn of events six months later.

Rouault's *La Sainte Face* should be situated within this context: it was finished not only in "the threatening years," but very likely soon after the Nazi takeover of February and March 1933. Hence, its hieratic serenity should not only come as stillness—it should come as a stillness that shocks. In the midst of historical madness, it aims at transcending time and space, even as it portrays iconic suffering. The wide-open eyes, reminiscent of Romanesque and Byzantine works, are not Rouault's downcast eyes of the later 1930s. They are the eyes of late antique portraits described by Peter Brown: "Their emphasis is on the eyes. The eyes flash out at us, revealing an inner life hidden in a charged cloud of flesh." As Julian the Apostate (332-363) wrote of the philosopher who most influenced him, "The very pupils of his eyes were winged, he had a long grey beard; one could hardly endure the sharp movement of his eyes."[31]

As noted above in the discussion of *C'est par ses meurtrissures…* (**no. 27fff**), in the 1922-1939 versions of the Holy Face,[32] Rouault takes pains to add and accent thorns, transforming the Shroud into Veronica's Sudarium. Here, in 1933, there are thorns. They are not, however, the frenzied tangle of those in the *Miserere* plates; rather, they are pushed back into a secondary role by the foregrounded halo, whose vivid, jagged yellow strokes can easily be confused with thorns. Indeed, the halo seems to be made of transfigured thorns. Taken along with the eyes, the overall effect is primitivist in Baudelaire's sense:

Great eyes of my child, beloved shrines,

Fig. 7a. Paul Verlaine, photograph, Rouault's personal collection. Photo courtesy Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris.

Fig. 7b. Paul Verlaine's mortuary mask, photograph, Rouault's personal collection. Photo courtesy Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris.

you make me think of those enchanted
caves
where out of the lethargic mysteries
neglected treasures tenuously shine.[33]

Rouault has worked hard to convey a sense of the "primitive" here, as he has in all his "unfinished" Holy Faces from before 1922 through 1939. The paradox of early-twentieth-century "modernism," as noted earlier, was its reliance on the "primitive" to achieve the sense of having turned the page on more recent pasts. But the primitive in 1933 aims at more than mere Primitivism or Modernism or a hybrid of both. It attempts a likeness of Christ that is, borrowing words from Norman Bryson (commenting on Georges Didi-Huberman), "not representational but 'presentational,' unmediated…the sacred is to be found in the suspension or overturning of the representational economy."[34] It is as though the brutality of the modern world, quickly gathering steam in 1933, forced any representations of divinity—even an incarnate one—into an almost impossible paradox. Bryson's remarks on Fra Angelico seem appropriate to Rouault's *Sainte Face*:

> Theologically, the picture insists on nescience: its God is truly Other, unknowable, unrepresentable, and in the face of that unknowability, the picture voids itself as representation, sacrifices itself, hollows itself out. The insistence on making a representation that abjures its own powers of narrative and optical resolution corresponds to *a whole doctrine of sacred ignorance*: God's presence is felt and known in the failure of representation, not its success.[35]

The *Sainte Face* is an image whose familiarity can lead to being quickly categorized and filed. Rouault's 1933 work, along with all the studies that lead up to and follow it, invites reconsideration. It was produced during a menacing time in which representations of the "truly Other"—even representations of an incarnate Other—could quickly collapse into kitsch. Rouault's primitivism is more than fashionable modernism (although it is also that). Like the Shroud and the Sudarium themselves, it is an attempt at the unmediated "presentational"—the suspension, overturning, or even failure, of the representational economy.[36]

IV. 1933–1939: Autumnal Intimations of Mortality

Rouault produced two small sets of assorted subjects during his sixties, one published in 1933 and another in 1939. Seen against the large folio projects of this decade, not to mention the grand oil paintings, the significance of these smaller works can easily be overlooked. However, pausing to view them more closely within the framework of mortality—mortality on the epic scale of world-historical

events, and on the small scale of Rouault's own increasing age—these subjects suggest a retrospective reflection not unlike that of *Souvenirs intimes* (1926, **nos. 22a-f**), thus offering a lens through which to view the larger works.

The first of these small collections is a set of four large-scale black and white lithographs Rouault produced between 1926-33 (published by Vollard in 1933).[37] *Mystic Masque* is fortunate to display two of these four, both of which emerged from Rouault's studies of the mortuary mask of Paul Verlaine (**figs. 7a, b**): first, a portrait of *Verlaine* (**no. 36**); second, the head of *Saint Jean-Baptiste* (**no. 37**).[38]

The shared element is Paul Verlaine, one of Rouault's two favorite poets (the other being Baudelaire), and a foundational source of Symbolism's decadent strain. Verlaine's death in January 1896, occurring during Rouault's fourth year in Moreau's atelier, might very well have made a strong impression on the young artist. He undoubtedly knew the volume of various portraits of Verlaine, collected and published by F.A. Cazals as *Paul Verlaine, ses portraits* (1896), which also included a preface by Huysmans and letters by Félicien Rops and Ernest Delahaye.[39] As early as 1914, Rouault had written Suarès asking, "Do you have a portrait of Verlaine in your documents to loan me? I believe that [Eugène] Carrière made several (I want it to make an embossment [*c'est pour une estampe*])."[40] That same year, Rouault had written this poem in homage:

> So you alone perhaps
> Would have understood me, Verlaine!
> And you would have smiled, touched.
> If I had told you that I
> Have searched and searched
> And fear I have not yet found
> The harmonious rose of your scarf,
> On cold and saddened blues…[41]

Rouault's attempts to find the right blend of Verlaine's "harmonious rose" scarf and "cold and saddened blues" of his coat—again, the red/blue dyad of primary colors, the foundation of Gothic stained glass as well as Byzantine divine/human symbolism—can be seen in both *Verlaine à la Vierge* (1939, **no. 60**) and the unfinished version (1929-39, **no. 79**).

A comparison of studies made of the mortuary mask of Verlaine and of John the Baptist's head on the platter shows the way in which Rouault's imagination seamlessly morphed one into the other (**figs. 8a, b**). Like Verlaine's poetical work, the image of John the Baptist's head also evokes strains of the decadent milieu in which Rouault spent his formative years. The dance of Salomé was one of the Symbolists' favorite scenes—cf. Moreau's *Salome Dancing before Herod* (1876)—and Moreau's *The Apparition* (ca. 1874-76) depicted the grisly Baptist's head still dripping blood while hovering above the stilled dancer. Rouault had exhibited

Figs. 8a and 8b. Georges Rouault, lithographic studies. Left: one of two studies of Paul Verlaine, based on his mortuary mask. Right: first study of John the Baptist, made using the same stone. Photos courtesy Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris.

his own *Salomé* in 1900 during the period following Moreau's death. Additionally, as noted above,[42] Moreau's version of *Orpheus* (also known as *The Thracian Girl carrying the head of Orpheus*, 1865) uses Orpheus' lyre as a horizontal surface on which to carry his severed head. Orpheus, John the Baptist, and Verlaine all serve as poetic-prophetic figures who "would have understood" Rouault.

The second of these two small collections is a set of three large-scale, brilliantly colored aquatints, produced between 1936 and 1939 with a view to renewing work on the *Miserere*.[43] Here again, the present exhibition is fortunate to display two: *Automne* (1938?) and *La Baie des Trépassés* (1939, **nos. 57** and **58**).[44] If the Baptist's head is a reminiscence of and homage to Moreau's *Apparition*, *Automne* can be seen as the same tribute paid to Paul Cézanne's *Large Bathers* (1900-05).[45] The reddish-brown hues of turning leaves permeate the bodies of the nudes, especially the arms stretched out in the over-the-head pose descended from Cézanne and so central to Rouault's iconography.[46]

The same reddish-browns are both darker and yet more vibrant in the hallucinatory *Baie des Trépassés*. Translated as "Bay of the Dead" or "Dead Man's Bay," the name refers to an actual bay in Brittany famous for shipwrecked bodies that wash up there.[47] In Rouault's depiction, the fiery sun sets on the horizon, casting a brilliant glow over the skeletons now shorn of the flesh that once softened colors. Those on the boat wave farewell to those on shore. On the right sides of both *Automne* and *La Baie*, figures lift their right arms, the bather pointing to her left, the skeleton gesturing farewell. As in other Rouault works where living subjects are paired with skeletons, these two works taken as a diptych can be seen as an experience of Baudelairean *dédoublement*. When consciousness looks at itself in a mirror and suddenly "doubles itself" as *self*-consciousness, it glimpses autumnal intimations of its own mortality (cf. *Trois Juges* 1938, **no. 54**). The chilling figures, migrated from Rouault's illustrations for the *Fleurs du mal*, can be seen as an homage to Baudelaire.

Bringing these reflections round to the beginning, Verlaine's connection with "Autumn" seems clear: one of the works for which he is best known is *Chanson d'Automne*.

> The long sobs of / The violins / of autumn
> Lay waste my heart / With monotones of boredom.
> Quite colorless / And choking when / The hour strikes
> I think again / Of vanished days / And cry.
>
> And so I leave / On cruel winds / Squalling
> And gusting me / Like a dead leaf /
> Falling.[48]

By 1933, at age sixty-two, Rouault had already outlived his era's average male lifespan by at least two years. (He could hardly have known he would live another twenty-five years!) These two small series of the 1930s taken together—the four large lithographs and the four large aquatints in colors—seem to be autumnal graphics, paying homage to desert prophets: Baudelaire and Verlaine, Moreau, and Cezanne. They offer a lens through which to view the large works that follow as late-life reminiscences, catalyzed by autumn's chill.

> *Je me souviens*
> *Des jours anciens*
> *Et je pleure.*[49]

V. 1936-1939: Three Graphic Folios: Shooting Star, Evil Flowers, Passion

In discovering the printer Roger Lacourière, Rouault at last found someone whose technique allowed him to realize the colors he envisioned. Three large folios planned at this time all demonstrate Lacourière's results: the *Cirque de l'Étoile filante* (printed 1934-35, published 1938 by Vollard, **nos. 45a–q**); *Passion* (printed 1935-36, published 1939 by Vollard, **nos. 47a–q**); and *Les Fleurs du mal* (printed 1936-38, unpublished, **nos. 46a–l**).

In 1934, at the age of sixty-three, Rouault was hard at work on the *Cirque de l'Étoile filante*. Since the *Cirque,* jointly planned with Suarès, had been abandoned due to the controversial nature of his

texts, Rouault himself provided both images and text for this folio. The series shows both continuity and discontinuity with the earlier attempt. The elongated figures (echoing ancient Egyptian ones) are seen in both the 1930 *Parade* (**no. 38b**) and a 1934 oil study for the new series (**no. 39**). However, there is also discontinuity. Bodies in most of the other plates in the 1934-35 *Cirque de l'Étoile filante* are fuller and upper-body only, depicted in portraits or profiles (cf. **nos. 45f, 45h, 45k,** and **45q**). The influence from the fantastical figures dominating the years leading up to the publication of *Ubu* in 1932 has lessened here while a Romanesque or Byzantine hieraticism becomes prominent. The fuller bodies and portraiture of 1934-35 do not look back so much to the 1928 *Ubu* and 1930 *Cirque* figures as point ahead toward the *Passion* (1935-36) and *Les Fleurs du mal* (1936-38).

Two other items from 1934 offer insight into Rouault's working method. Like *Parade* (**no. 42**), *La petite écuyère* (**no. 43**) offers yet another example of Rouault's practice of comparing coloration possibilities by overlaying oil paint on bases of engravings. This particular piece is a variation on a plate of the *Cirque de l'Étoile filante* (**no. 45c**). A second item is the set of nine pieces in preparation for another plate in that series, *Douce-Amère* (**nos. 44a-h**), offering a unique look not only at Rouault's process of graphic design, but also his fastidious attention to color. The set includes two proof impressions in black, three cancelled copper plates, and four proof impressions in color. Additionally, the heavy annotations show Rouault's meticulous instructions regarding the colors to be realized by Lacourière's printing.

The *Cirque de l'Étoile filante* can be seen as yet another manifestation of autumnal retrospection, returning Rouault to the traveling circuses he loved in childhood. Published when he was exactly sixty-five years old, this marvelous array of characters, created with such affection and charm, brings out a "second naivete" in Rouault. No one exemplifies this more than the main figure of the story, *Tristes os* (**no. 45j**). Although his white mustache marks him as an older clown, he is far removed from the "old clown" of the seated 1930 *Cirque*, who evokes Baudelaire's "Old Saltimbanque." Rather, *Tristes os* is trim, well-toned and standing tall, keeping up with the best of the young. His name would seem to be a wordplay from the *Miserere* psalm 50 (51), but in these lines the psalm's pleading for mercy has evolved into a prediction of renewed youth:

> *Annonce-moi l'allégresse et la joie,*
> *Et les os que tu as brisés se réjouiront.*
> Let me hear joy and gladness;
> let the bones that you have crushed
> rejoice.[50]

The weary bones of *Tristes os* would seem to be greatly rejuvenated, a conclusion arrived at by Gael Mooney in her essay on hieraticism in these 1930s works and most especially in *Cirque de l'Étoile filante. Tristes os* may represent a more general fact about Rouault's life at this time. These pieces were produced during a time of extreme turmoil, personal as well as political. In 1935, in the midst of being "obliged to complete hundreds of canvases to fulfill the terms of an abusive contract with his art dealer,"[51] Rouault wrote Suarès: "I am trapped—wretched and harassed from all sides… but *I am inwardly at peace*—not always, but infinitely more often than so many of those who imagine that painting is done with the tongue and not with the tip of a brush and colours."[52] The production of this wandering circus troupe—the "Shooting Star Circus"—suggests that Rouault, even in the midst of feeling "trapped, wretched, and harassed," was also capable of retreating to an oasis of inner harmony and balance.

A final related oil study is *Parade* (1931-1939, **no. 39**). Closely connected to one of the 1930 *Cirque* numbers, it is primarily a variant of a plate intended for the *Miserere* but later rejected for lack of time.[53] In addition to showing *Cirque* as the source for some intended *Miserere* plates, it also raises a curious question. Why does the *Miserere*'s final version include only one circus figure? i.e., *Qui ne se grime pas?* (**no. 27g**).

Passion, the second of the deluxe folios that were both printed and published, was another collaboration with Suarès, this one successful. Thomas Epstein's essay in this volume provides a valuable framework for reading the texts and images.[54]

Fig. 9. Fernand Cormon, *Cain*, 1880, oil on canvas, 157 x 275 in. Musée d'Orsay.

Grouping some of the images also provides thematic linkages with works within the broader purview of *Mystic Masque*.

Chemineau, *Le Vieil homme chemine*, and *Aide-bourreau (portant un des bois de la croix)* (**nos. 47o, 47p, 47q**): Epstein's explanation of this cryptic trio provides a starting point. As the reader of Suarès's text eventually discovers, the *Chemineau* is actually Cain, the son of Adam and Eve. It seems reasonable to imagine that either Suarès or Rouault or both were influenced by Fernand Cormon's *Cain*, held today at the Musée d'Orsay, Paris (**fig. 9**). At the head of the caravan is Cain as an old man, condemned to wander for the rest of his life for having killed his brother, Abel. Rouault's depiction of the "vagabond" picks up the arm gesture of one of Cain's male family members (a son or grandson) carrying a similarly tilted wooden pole over his shoulder. The second of Rouault's "wanderer" plates, *Le Vieil homme chemine* (**no. 47o**), occurs in Suarès's chapter "Adam and Eve at Golgotha." The "old man" is Adam: "Thus passes by and passes by again, eternal upon eternal labor of blood, Adam, the oldest peasant of the earth."[55]

The third figure is the "executioner's aid." Visually speaking, the executioner is identical with Cain, a device that Rouault had used in *Ubu* where the "scheming politician" (*Le Politicard*, **no. 28i**) is barely indistinguishable from the Soviet theater director (*Le Directeur de théâtre*, **no. 28l**). Rouault's practice of doubling figures mutually informs both: colonialist politics is like communist theater, and Soviet theater is like imperialist exploitation. However, the executioner is not identical with but rather a reverse mirrored image of Cain, yet another device that Rouault would use again in *Les Fleurs du mal* (cf. *Juges*, 1938, **no. 46g**). This seems to be a case of Baudelairean *dédoublement*, in which self-consciousness reveals an aspect of the self by seeing one's reflection. In *Cirque de l'Étoile filante*, Rouault celebrates the circus troupe that wanders the earth, free from the weighty constraints of self-satisfaction. In *Passion*, Rouault explores the shadow side of the wandering archetype: humanity is cursed to wander far from home as punishment for fratricide. The executioner's aid will also put to death his brother—Christ. It is not a once-only historical occurrence, but rather an eternal return—"the eternal labor of blood." And yet, built into the ancient ritual of execution is the executed's pardon of the executioner. This suggests a third meaning for the visual identity of Cain and the executioner's aid—another occurrence of the "identity of opposites" whose sum cancels out both components.[56] In forgiving his executioner, Christ nullifies the curse of Cain.

The three images of spilling blood would seem to be paralleled by the three depictions of Christ, the one whose blood is spilled. The profile of *Christ* (**no. 47b**) is notable for the use of the "balance bar" as a frame within the stained glass window. Crossing Christ exactly at his shoulders, the red bar is simultaneously a symbol of disequilibrium (insofar as it spills blood) and of equilibrium (insofar as it restores cosmic harmony). *Ecce dolor* (**no. 47c**) and *Ecce Homo* (**no. 47d**) are both notable for their explicit appeals to late-medieval / early-modern tropes. (See, for example, Rouault's own photograph of Bosch's *Ecce Homo*, **fig. 10**.) In all three depictions, Christ's eyes are downcast as if absorbed in contemplation, a mark of Rouault's

later 1930s works. Christ's nakedness is striking in *Ecce Homo* and echoes that seen, for example, in Dürer's *The Large Passion—Ecce Homo* (1498-99, see fig. 3 in Schloesser "1921-1929"). Dürer has a soldier pull back Christ's cape to display his nude vulnerability while Christ awkwardly draws the lower part of his cape to cover his genitals.[57] Rouault is more circumspect, partly because he is deeply unnerved by the image: "The force of Jesus is in his nakedness."[58] Finally, the red cloak worn by Christ (hybridized with purple in *Ecce Homo*) is not scriptural (where the cloak is purple signifying royalty). The red comes rather from Catholic ritual practice in which the vestments on both Palm Sunday and Good Friday, as well as feasts of martyrs, are red, signifying blood, suffering, and sacrifice.

In addition to the shadow side of the wanderers, the protagonists in *Passion* are also all found barefoot and on the road: the fisherman and the peasants are practically interchangeable and recall the *Miserere* plate in which Christ takes refuge in the wandering *va-nu-pied* (**no. 27d**). *Christ et disciples* (recalling the road to Emmaus) and *Rencontre* both occur on the road (cf. *Paysage tropical*, 1928, **no. 28d**; *Paysage à la tour*, 1938, **no. 46l**). Likewise, Christ is found in the *faubourg*, among the poor, and with the "holy woman" who, as we learn from the text (without much surprise), is Veronica. Perceived or not, Christ is immanently present in both urban and rural landscapes.

Fig. 10. Hieronymos Bosch, *Ecce Homo*, print, Rouault's personal collection. Photo courtesy Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris.

For Rouault's antagonists, we must go indoors. *Le Christ et Mammon* (**no. 47f**) takes place in a crowded room populated by well-dressed and well-fed seated characters, both ample and immobile. In contrast to the several depictions of protagonists on the road and in poor urban neighborhoods, the scene depicts the ultimatum presented in the gospel: "You cannot serve God and Mammon."[59] The character "Apache, the magnificent elector of Golgotha, the jackal glorified by all the Academies," appears in the chapter titled "Princeps Iuventutis" (First among the Young), an early Roman imperial designation for the Emperor's heir apparent.[60] Rouault's disregard for academics and politicians links this "Jackal" to the other grotesques in his human bestiary, including *L'Administrateur colonial* (1928, **no. 28h**), *Son avocat, en phrases creuses* (1922, **no. 27w**), *Superhomme* (1916, **no. 19**), *Pédagogue* (1912-13, **no. 16**), and *L'avantageux* (1912-13, **no. 14**).

Finally, Suarès's text for "*Sainte Pute*" (Saint Whore), the passage in which the *Dame à la huppe* (**no. 47g**) appears, is quite graphic. The prostitute spills out her lament: "O my life, hideous abundance of spasms and semen, receptacle of bastards, grave (or hole) of abuses (*fosse aux outrages*), flesh of woman, vase and fountain for bystanders," and so on.[61] In response to this crude stream of self-loathing and self-denigration, a voice comes out of the shadows, addressing her in the familiar: "You are sacred to whoever understands (*Tu es sacrée à qui peut le comprendre*): not as the sinner, but as the victim, the carrier of all sins (*la victime, le sac à tous péchés*)." (The theological concept of "vicarious suffering and redemption" runs throughout this passage.[62]) The voice goes on to say that "Saint Whore" is "the ransom (*la rançon*)" of all those who denigrate her: "your sisters, the rich, the posh (*les huppées*), the wives, the oh-so-venerable and oh-so-honest..." If the "holy whore" were not the "victim, on the auction block representing all the women," not one of these others could hold on to her "crest of vanity" (*sa huppe de vanité*).[63]

Fig. 11. Georges Rouault, woodcut of prostitute ("Sainte Pute") for André Suarès, *Passion* (Paris: Ambroise Vollard, 1939) 92. Photo courtesy Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris

Fig. 12. Domes of cloister and church of S. Giovanni degli Erimiti (12th century), postcard, Rouault's personal collection. Photo courtesy Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris

What seems most significant about this passage is that Rouault chose the color plate *not* to illustrate the main subject of the text, but rather to illustrate something of a side-figure in the narrative, the briefly mentioned woman splendidly dressed in clothing, jewelry, and a "crest of vanity." (Other such women may be found include *Dame du Haut-Quartier* (1922, **no. 27t**), *Les Deux matrones* (1928, **no. 28m**), and *Femme fière* (1938, **no. 46a**). By contrast, Rouault illustrates the prostitute—the "holy whore" who is the main character—not in a color aquatint, but rather in a humble and self-effacing woodcut facing the first page of the text (**fig. 11**). She is completely vulnerable in her nakedness—a parallel to Christ—modestly covering her genital area with her right hand. In contrast to the woman wearing the "crest of vanity" whose right arm is stretched out imperiously—cf. *Superhomme* (**no. 19**), *nous croyons rois* (1923, **no. 27f**), and *Plus le coeur est noble...* (1926, **no. 27ww**)—the prostitute's left arm stretches overhead. She echoes the anguished pose derived from Michelangelo's dying slave and Rodin's *Age of Bronze*, seen most clearly in *Fille (Femme aux Cheveux Roux)* (1908, **no. 10**), *Acrobates XIII* (1913, **no. 18**), *Être Dempsey* (1927-29, **no. 25**), *Christ aux outrages* (1926, **no. 26n**), and *Ne sommes nous pas tous forçats?* (1920-29, **no. 32**). The central contrast of *Passion* is clear: anguished poverty versus self-satisfied riches, a most fitting subject during the Great Depression.

Beginning in 1936, Rouault worked on the third large folio, another attempt at illustrating Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du mal*. He had originally intended to produce thirty color etchings; only twelve were completed, printed by Lacourière between 1936 and 1938. However, Vollard's death in 1939 put an end to this project. The present exhibition is fortunate to have five for display: *"Fière autant qu'un vivant, Nu de profil, de sa noble stature..."*, and *Juges, Passion, Paysage à la tour* (**nos. 46b, 46g, 46h, 46i,** and **46l**). In this work produced (but never completed) toward the end of the decade, Rouault returned to some of his favorite themes. The vertical tower is perhaps the clearest and most definite statement of this theme found anywhere in his work, the crowning red ball a remarkable echo of the twelfth-century domed tower at Palermo (**fig. 12**). Both Christ and the Nude, lowered eyes suggesting inward contemplation, vulnerable in their nakedness, have traveled a long way since the Christ and nude figures of the 1905 era. The skeleton who is "as proud of her noble stature as if she were living" is a vibrantly colored variant of the same subject produced in black and white (1927, **no. 26e**).

The intriguing innovation here, alluded to several times above in various contexts, is the figure of the two "Judges." The judge on the right is clearly recognizable as such in his red robe and black hat. The figure on the left is mysterious—although his black robe and red hat invert the colors of the judge, they do not correspond to any judicial figure's garb. Additionally, the bared teeth of the left-side figure suggest a skeleton. Although the reading is speculative, this would seem to be Rouault's clearest and most definite statement of Baudelairean *dédoublement*. It is a moment of psychological mirroring in which the judge, seeing his own reflection, comes to a self-consciousness of his own mortality. The skeleton seems to say: the "masque" of the judicial robes will come to an end one day.

In these three graphic folios, Rouault introduces few new subjects. Instead, he takes those which had by now crystallized into well-defined layers of his "semantic river"—wandering and stability; outdoor roads and indoor stagnation; humility and pride; nude vulnerability and defensive clothing; arms stretched anxiously overhead and those imperiously extended—and inserts them within strictly ordered frames. Their hieratic arrangements set the danger of disequilibrium within overall patterns of harmonious stability while their equally diffused luminosity suggests emanating from behind or within. They can be seen as Rouault's mature repertoire, expressed in the brilliant colors that he had long sought and that Lacourière had the means to achieve.

VI. 1936-1939: Grand Oil Paintings: The Last Romantic

The exuberant paintings of the second half of the 1930s mask the anxieties of their epoch and their maker. It does not seem inappropriate to recall that this was the epoch of Ginger Rogers, Fred Astaire, and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, the larger-than-life filmed musicals that served as diversions—*divertissements*—from the Great Depression. They were the cinematic analogue to the colorful pageants produced by the traveling circuses of Rouault's impoverished youth. In the grand oil paintings produced during the menacing 1930s, marked by widespread economic poverty and the march to war, Rouault recreated those colorful memories on large-sized canvases. Their exuberance is framed, however, within an overall serenity, the inner "oasis" about which he liked to speak.

Rouault produced a large number of Pierrots during this period, perhaps bowing to Vollard's keen instinct for the demands of the market (**fig. 13**).[64] The flower held over the heart by the 1936 *Pierrot* (**no. 49**) represents the lovesick innocence of Pierrot's stock type. His white tunic accents youthful innocence, and the baroque display of rich colors framing him conveys all the unrequited love he passionately desires to give. And yet, poised as he is on the verge of a headlong fall, he is held in place by a pronounced red balance bar giving the frame stable equilibrium. A second *Pierrot* created at almost the same time (1937-38, **no. 48**) offers a radically different palette and tonality. The cool variations on greens and blues show off Rouault's turn to pastels in these later years, sharply accented by brilliant hot flashes of orange. In a time of Great Depression, this sturdy, towering, and self-confident Pierrot suggests hope and promise.

Le dernier romantique (ca. 1937, **no. 50**) can be considered a self-portrait.[65] The hat transports this character back into the nineteenth century—perhaps the naval age of Napoleon and Lord Nelson? (cf. *Quiquengrogne*, 1943, **no. 65k**)—far from the mechanized horrors of 1937. At least one passage in which the title occurs is in a comment on the

Fig. 13. Pierrot, photograph, Rouault's personal collection. Photo courtesy Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris.

Fig. 14. "These six women are the most elegant of the Paris season," press-clipping, Rouault's personal collection. Photo courtesy Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris.

works of Chardin, Rembrandt, and Poussin: they "go far more directly to my heart," Rouault writes; "I am not afraid of employing this rather old-fashioned word, having been called the last of the Romantics."[66] And yet, if the appellation is intended as a self-reference, it is also a slightly ironic one, for Rouault writes in another setting that he is "being *wrongly* held to be the last of the Romantics."[67] Seeing more than a bit of Baudelaire in himself, Rouault describes the poet as less romantic than classical:

> [Baudelaire's] talent flourished following a more classical line than it might have appeared to…Classical, a word which for so many people is nothing more than an empty formula…is, however, the furthest horizon, glowing with light of the mind that liberates itself from all unplanned styles and forms.

Again, the parallel with Stravinsky's neoclassicism is suggestive: Variety is worthwhile only in pursuit of similitude.[68]

If *Le dernier romantique* is an ambivalent self-appellation, then the salty character who looks suspiciously over his back (eyeing his critics) might well be a moment of Baudelairean *dédoublement*. Rouault stands outside himself to address the soul-brother within:

> Poor Baudelaire! Perhaps the human heart is so secret that they envy you still, these brilliant, sparkling men, *the triumph of the moment*; how well do they know that their successes are ephemeral? Were they to die within the hour, they would be forgotten. From this they draw no pleasure or solace. They think too often of the immortal metal in which their statues will be cast.
>
> You, Baudelaire, you plunge the wedge of misery into your heart, each time further in. The smile of a soul-brother is enough, perhaps, for you to battle once more against the tide of distress.[69]

Moderns have forgotten Baudelaire's fundamental premise: the "modern" is *both* the momentary *and* the eternal.[70] Given this homage to the tradition that "liberates itself from all unplanned styles and forms," it is not surprising that *Le dernier romantique* is classically proportioned, a large triangle set within a rectangle bisected by an accentuated balance bar. It is worth noting that in all of Rouault's works classified in the catalogue raisonné as "Male Types 1929-1939," this is the only non-circus figure with the balance bar.[71] This painting unquestionably had singular importance for Rouault.

Two other large canvases return us to Rouault's central theme of judgment: *Christ et docteur* (1937, **no. 53**) and *Trois juges* (ca. 1938, **no. 54**). Christ's interrogation by the "Doctor" (of the Jewish Law) takes us all the way back to the very beginning of Rouault's career, the 1894 *L'Enfant Jésus parmi les docteurs* (see fig. 20 in Schloesser "1871-1901").[72] In the Concours Chenavard, the jury had snubbed Rouault, but a student protest led to a new verdict. In this late painting, Christ does not look at his richly dressed interrogator (whose imperious right arm resembles so many other antagonists,

arrogant in their ignorance). His lowered eyes have turned inward instead, finding an inner oasis of harmony even in this anxious setting. As for the three judges, they too seem to have turned their eyes down, lost in contemplation. In Rouault's old age, these judges, at least, receive a reprieve.

Even *L'Italienne* (1938, **no. 55**) has her eyes turned down as she, too, seems lost in contemplation. She represents a type that evolves in the 1930s and continues into the last years of Rouault's career: the beautiful or fashionable woman.[73] Recent explorations in Rouault's archives have discovered press clippings from fashion magazines (**fig. 14**). Such female types are new, moving beyond the prostitute / *bourgeoise* dyad (as well as the mother and child figures found everywhere) into a realm simply celebrating beauty.[74] In these types, Dante's quest for Beatrice meets Ferlinghetti's "little charleychaplin man,"

> in his supposed advance
> toward that still
> higher perch
> where Beauty stands and waits
> with gravity
> to start her death-defying leap[75]

Was this evolved type a function of Vollard's commissions? of a new outlook brought by critical success and financial stability? of reaching inner peace as he approached old age? Whatever the causes, in his sixties and seventies, Rouault painted serenely beautiful women, a number of the 1930s names having Mediterranean associations: *The Spaniard*; *The Italian*; *The Moroccan*, *The Oriental* (i.e., wearing a Middle Eastern veil), *Carlotta*, *Carmencita*.

Rouault also spent increasing amounts of time on landscapes, exemplified by *Paysage légendaire* (1936, **no. 51**) and *Crépuscule* (1937, **no. 52**).[76] He had first recovered a turn to nature and a painting of landscapes during his 1902 cure at Évian. His enthusiasm for the landscape's potential to convey the fantastical can be found in the *Réincarnations du Père Ubu*. Suarès had told Rouault that this was where he should concentrate his energy since Rouault could "reach something not done for a very long time: the religious landscape ... As for the mystical landscape, no one has succeeded in attaining that for centuries: not since Rembrandt."[77] In both of these representatives of the genre, the urban landscape is transformed—or perhaps better, transfigured—by the numinous presence of Christ permeating ordinary existence.

Finally, *Le clown blessé* (1939, **no. 62**) achieves a truly monumental stature. (The painting is one of two variants on a work painted seven years earlier, one of which is held at the Centre Pompidou.) When compared with the 1932 work, the 1939 variant demonstrates Rouault's increasing embrace of abstraction throughout the 1930s. In terms of coloration, the darker 1932 tapestry (dominated by a heavy juxtaposition of green and orange) differs markedly from the use of pastels in the 1939 variant, a study in lightness and coolness.

Rouault uses the word "wounded" (*blessé*) in only a half-dozen of his nearly two thousand works. In addition to the three works titled "The Wounded Clown," there are three variants of a work entitled simply *Le blessé*, one of the plates intended for the *Miserere* that was rejected for matters of time (**fig. 15**).[78] They depict not a clown but a wounded soldier seated on the ground, his head bowed in the same manner as the wounded clown's, his similarly bent arm supported by his knee. Suspended above

Fig. 15. Georges Rouault, *Le blessé* (The Wounded). Photo courtesy Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris

him is the *Sainte Face* of Christ as captured by Veronica's veil. The work clearly establishes a parallel between the wounded soldier and the wounded Christ. The parallel between the wounded clown and Christ would seem to be supported by considering the red suit of the clown leaning heavily on the figure in blue. Rouault's evocation of stained glass here is more pronounced than usual due to his use of the ancient red/blue contrast. The depth of the red (somewhat at odds with the overall pastels) invites comparison with the brilliant red cloaks in the three representations of Christ in *Passion* (published the same year, **nos. 47b, 47c, 47d**). As noted above, the red cloak is not faithful to the royal purple indicated in the scriptural text; it should be seen rather in Catholic ritual terms, indicating blood, suffering, and sacrifice. It seems reasonable that these elements would have been interwoven in Rouault's understanding of this work: the wounded clown, the wounded soldier, the red cloak worn by Christ during his mocking trial, and Veronica's veil: "It is by his wounds that we are healed."

VII. 1939: Autumn's Chill Wind: An Interrupted Life

In order to sense what a devastating blow the mid-summer of 1939 dealt Rouault, it is necessary only to read two letters. First, André Suarès wrote to Rouault on May 31, 1939, finalizing their plans for Suarès to write poems for the *Miserere* plates:

> Bring the fifty-seven plates [of *Miserere & Guerre*] with you. We shall study them together… I will tell you how to place them, those which will be part of *Guerre*, and those which will be in *Miserere*: I conceived the two books like two dramas. Everything is nearly finished in my mind and many pages have already been written. I would like to be finished with them this summer. But the work is immense: not pages but walls to cover.

Second, Suarès wrote Rouault again two months later on July 25, 1939:

> Vollard killed on the road, on the way to Trembley, my dear Rouault. He was left there all night without help or assistance. He suffered greatly, the cervical vertebrae were ruptured. All the details are frightful. I am shattered… No one, ever, will be able to follow in Vollard's footsteps in the publishing of our work. What will happen? I dread an irreparable catastrophe.[79]

The *Miserere* had first been conceived twenty-seven years earlier on the 1912 death of Rouault's father. The end had seemed in sight the summer of 1939, which explains the numerous painted oil variants for both the *Fleurs du mal* and the *Miserere* that were done in the latter year. The painted variants give the viewer a sense of Rouault's energies pushing forward full-tilt, hoping to publish these great projects by age seventy (1941).

The *Nu au miroir* (1939, **no. 56**) is a study closely related to the *Nu au profil* (**no. 46h**), one of the twelve finished plates of the *Fleurs du mal* (1936-38), and would seem to have been a study for one of the eighteen plates left unfinished following Vollard's death. The pink pastels are sumptuous and point ahead to the *Danseuses* and *Pierrot blanc* of *Divertissement* (1943, **nos. 65h, 65i**). The use of the mirror, especially in proximity to the poetic mind—Baudelaire's *femme en esprit* (women in mind)—is close to Baudelaire's love of doubling and the play of opposites.[80] Finally, the nude's linkage with autumn becomes immediately apparent when looking at the catalogue raisonné in which nudes, autumn, and the *Fleurs du mal* are largely interchangeable.[81]

Abandonné (1939, **no. 61**) is one of the *Miserere* subjects abandoned in 1948 for the ultimate finished series; nevertheless, it was still treated in oil studies.[82] In both figure and color, the 1939 *Abandoned* demonstrates Rouault's evolution. The graphic plate of which this is a painted variant is somewhat fantastical. A long wall that angles into the distance seems to set the scene in an alley, reminiscent of many depictions of poor neighborhoods. However, a painting of the Madonna and child on the wall, hanging above the abandoned figure clothed only in loincloth, adds ambivalence,

apparently setting the scene indoors. In the oil painting, abstraction eliminates this ambiguity since the wall no longer extends backward into a neighborhood. Abstraction also eliminates other elements: Christ's face and hand outstretched in blessing, both detailed in the lithograph, are reduced to bare solid volumes in the painting. It is as though Rouault in his later years could concur with Gustave Moreau: "One thing alone dominates me, a burning enthusiasm for abstraction."[83]

Increased abstraction lets color take main stage. Although the trademark black outlines remain, they do not serve as tools of an anxious expressionism. Instead, the dark blues have been transformed into light variants of blue, gray, and green, while the reds have almost entirely been softened into flesh tones accented by light (though not harsh) yellows and white. A single vibrant band of yellow over Christ's head serves as a glowing halo, the blue-black of the night sky making way for a moon. Moonlight suffuses the painting; like a "mythical landscape" it glows with a "mystical" ambience. Like its 1939 contemporary, *Le clown blessé* (**no. 62**), this piece is a study in lightness.

Another oil study for the *Miserere* completed in 1939 is "*En ces temps noirs de jactance et d'incroyance, Notre-Dame de la Fin des Terres vigilante*" (1939, **no. 59**).[84] A secondary simpler title is offered in the catalogue raisonné: *Notre Dame des Champs* (Our Lady of the Fields).[85] The use of pastels, accented by warm yellows, orange, and ochre, echo those in *Abandonné* (**no. 61**). Unlike *Abandonné*, *Notre Dame* was ultimately included in the *Miserere* (**no. 27ddd**) and a discussion of its complex subject matter—the marvelous history of Notre-Dame de la Fin-des-Terres—may be found above.[86]

Yet another study prepared for the *Miserere* is *"Jésus sera en agonie jusqu'à la fin du monde"* (post-1930, **no. 63**), the title coming from Pascal's *Pensées* in which he meditates on Christ's agony in the garden, sweating drops of blood, while his followers fell asleep: "Jesus will be in agony until the end of the world. We must not sleep during that time."[87] The image became the second plate of the *Guerre* section of the *Miserere* while *Notre Dame de la Fin des Terres vigilante* is the third plate from the end. Thus, staying awake—vigilance—is the watchword at both the beginning and at the end of the "War" section. The spare minimalist quality points ahead starkly to Rouault's coming Third War. In his symbolist view of history (following Bloy), although historical episodes are unique, particular, and located in time, on another level, the agonies of individual lives are visible symbols pointing beyond themselves to an invisible ongoing Agony.

Two last major works of 1939 bring the interwar period to a conclusion. First, *Verlaine à la Vierge* (1939, **no. 60**) is exhibited along with a smaller "unfinished" work also dedicated to the poet, *Verlaine* (**no. 79**), produced sometime between 1929 and 1939, a study intended for yet another rejected *Miserere* plate.[88] In contrast with the engraved portrait of Verlaine discussed above (1933, **no. 36**), both *Verlaine à la Vierge* and the "unfinished" study position the poet sitting in contemplation before a Madonna and Child, who look very much like *Notre-Dame de la Fin des Terres vigilante* (**no. 59**; cf. *Miserere* plate, **no. 27ddd**). Her shrine is a bridge over which positivists stumble; this is a theme for Verlaine as well. Perhaps, sitting before the statue of the Madonna and Child, he recites lines from his poem dedicated to Huysmans, "Un Conte" (A Story):

> Then he will turn toward your Son and His Mother...
> Immediately there he is, he who quickly leaves behind
>
> All this apparatus of pride and of poor mischiefs,
> What they call mind and what they call Science
> And the laughs and the smiles where you pucker up
> The lip of little exegetes of unbelief! ...
>
> O make this happen, instill this grace in this soul,
> O you, Virgin Mother, O you, Mary Immaculate, ...
> You who stand with your feet on our consoled earth.[89]

The Virgin Mary appears in numerous Verlaine poems. However, the anti-positivist linkage between Notre-Dame de la Fin-des-Terres and this "*Vierge Mère*" whose feet stand upon "*notre terre consolée*" seems especially appropriate on the eve of a Second World War, in which the fruits of science would produce previously unimaginable horrors.

A second last work is Rouault's *La Crucifixion* (1939, **no. 64**). This stained glass was executed by glazier Jean Hébert-Stevens whose workshop had been inspired by Maurice Denis's Ateliers d'Art Sacré. Three copies were made of the design: one is at the Musée National d'Art Moderne de Paris, another is at the Vatican Museum, and the third (exhibited in *Mystic Masque*) held by the Musée d'art Contemporain de Montréal.[90] Rouault created very few works in stained glass—ten designs, fourteen pieces, all but four of them (Vatican City, Montreal, and two in Japan) are in France. In its figuration, the piece is a variant of the *Miserere* plate, *Aimez-vous les uns les autres* (**no. 27ee**). In its coloration, the brilliant richness of the red defies description. The work brings together the overarching themes of Rouault's 1930s: the horizontal bar on which Christ is crucified is the quintessential expression of the "red balance bar" introduced ten years earlier; the hieratic poses and strict formal arrangement express harmony and equilibrium in the midst of catastrophic cruelty; the reds evoke the deep colors of the three figures of Christ in the *Passion* realized by Lacourière; as the simple youthful face of Christ, surrounded by a halo of transfigured thorns, stares straight at the viewer—as in so many *Saintes Faces*—the heads of the onlookers are bowed, eyes lowered in contemplative sorrow. One figure, however, Saint John—"the disciple whom Jesus loved"—raises his head upward. Perhaps he is looking at the figure of Christ. But as he strains his neck back as far as it will go so that he might look up into the sky, his anguished position reminds us of figures we have seen before: *Ne sommes-nous pas forçats?* (**no. 32**) and *Sunt lacrymae rerum* (**no. 27z**).

Ambroise Vollard's death in July had overturned everything for Rouault. Just six weeks later, September 1, 1939, brought the second great interruption: the German invasion of Poland. Auden immortalized that day in poetic verse:

> Waves of anger and fear
> Circulate over the bright
> And darkened lands of the earth…
> The unmentionable odour of death
> Offends the September night.[91]

But Rouault's poetic verse, illustrated with such poignancy in the strained upward faces of the *forçat*, Orpheus, and the beloved disciple, universalizes that September night to characterize the human condition.

> *Are we not all slaves?*
> *There are tears at the very heart of things.*
> *Our Lady of the Lands of the Earth —*
> vigilant.

Endnotes

1 Lawrence Ferlinghetti, "Constantly Risking Absurdity…," *These are my Rivers. New & Selected Poems 1955-1993* (New York: New Directions, 1993) 96.

2 For just the 1930 New York reviews, see *Art News*, the *Evening Post*, and *The New York Sun* (all published April 5, 1930); *The New York Times* and the *New York Herald Tribune* (both published 6 April 1930); *New York American* (April 13, 1930); *Town and Country* (April 15, 1930); *The Arts* (April 16, 1930); *The Arts* and *Parnassus* (April 1930; *New Freeman* (May 24, 1930) and *Creative Art* (May 1930). See Georges Rouault, *Georges Rouault, forme, couleur, harmonie,* catalogue published for the Musée d'art moderne et contemporain de Strasbourg exhibition, 10 November 2006 to 18 March 2007, commissariat Fabrice Hergott (Strasbourg: Musées de Strasbourg, 2006) 260-261.

3 See Schloesser "Notes on the *Miserere* plates exhibited in *Mystic Masque*," in this volume.

4 *Portraits of Maria Lani by fifty-one painters: Brummer Gallery, Inc.: November 1st to 28th, 1929*, eds. Jean Cocteau, Marc Ramo, Waldemar Goerge (New York: The Gallery, 1929). Curiously enough, this event was discussed in Valmai Burdwood Evans, "A Scholastic Theory of Art," *Philosophy* 8/32 (October 1933): 397-411. See especially pp. 405-06 quoting Waldemar George.

5 *Time* (November 18, 1929). http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,738060,00.html. Accessed June 24, 2008.

6 Alexander Schouvaloff, "Georges Rouault. Le Fils Prodigue (Prodigal Son)," *The Art of Ballets Russes. The Serge Lifar Collection of Theater Designs, Costumes, and Paintings at the Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut* (New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press in association with the Wadsworth Atheneum, 1997) 300-05. The sets can be seen in the DVD recording: George Balanchine et al., *Choreography by Balanchine* (1979; New York, NY: Nonesuch Records, 2004).

7 "A new ballet by Prokofiev," *The Times* (London, July 2, 1929); qtd. in Schouvaloff 303.

8 Francis Poulenc, *My Friends and Myself* (London: Dobson, 1978); qtd. in Schouvaloff 302.

9 Shouvaloff 303.

10 Rouault, *Stella Vespertina* (1947), qtd. in François Chapon and Isabelle Rouault, *Rouault: œuvre gravé*, 2 vols. (Monte-Carlo: Éditions André Sauret, 1978) 2:49. The OG numbers are those assigned to Rouault's works in this catalogue raisonné.

11 Bernard Dorival and Isabelle Rouault, *Rouault: l'œuvre peint*, 2 vols. (Monte-Carlo: Éditions André Sauret, 1988) 2:21-35. The OP numbers are those assigned to Rouault's works in this catalogue raisonné.

12 This analysis (which departs from the Indianapolis Museum's dating) follows the catalogue raisonné: *"Qui ne se grime pas?* After 1930. Variant after plate 8 of the Miserere." See OP 1590.

13 See discussion of the triptych—*Ne sommes-nous pas forçats?...nous croyant rois. Qui ne se grime pas?*—in Schloesser, "Notes on the *Miserere* plates exhibited in *Mystic Masque*," in this volume.

14 These can also be seen in François Chapon, *Le Livre des livres de Rouault = The Illustrated Books of Rouault* (Monaco: André Sauret; Paris: Michèle Trinckvel, 1992) 228-229; 232-233.

15 Letter of Georges Rouault to Georges Chabot (October 21, 1931); qtd. in Dorival and Rouault, *l'Œuvre peint* 2:8.

16 Georges Rouault, "En marge des doctrines," *La Nouvelle Revue Française* 19/217 (October 1, 1931): 603-08; written in response to the "Chronique" of Marcel Arland, also published in the *N.R.F.* (July 1, 1931).

17 Rouault, "En marge des doctrines," 608.

18 Igor Stravinsky, *Poetics of Music in the Form of Six Lessons*, bilingual ed., trans. Arthur Knodel and Ingolf Dahl (1942; Cambridge, MA.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1970) 42.

19 For the story of this book see Thomas Epstein in this volume.

20 I am grateful to Gilles Rouault for communicating this information.

21 Angela Lampe, "Work in progress. Les œuvres inachevées," Hergott, *Forme, couleur, harmonie* 214-21. See also Gael Mooney in this volume.

22 Lampe 219, 221.

23 For an even clearer example see *Christ en croix* (unfinished, 1963 Donation), in Lampe 220, Fig. 16.

24 Letter of Georges Rouault to André Suarès (December 5, 1930), qtd. in Chapon and Rouault, *Œuvre gravé* 2:53.

25 Charles Baudelaire, "The Old Acrobat," *Parisian Prowler. Le Spleen de Paris. Petits Poèmes en prose*, trans. Edward K. Kaplan, 2nd ed. (Athens and London: Univ. of Georgia Press, [1989] 1997) 29, 30.

26 Pascal, *Pensées* Plèiade 185/Lafuma 199/Sellier 230. Fragments of Pascal's *Pensées* are referenced according to their Plèiade / Lafuma / Sellier numbers. For Pleiade, see Pascal, *Oeuvres complètes*, 2 vols. (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2000), vol. 2; for Lafuma, see Pascal, *Pensées*, trans. A.J. Krailsheimer, rev. ed. (New York: Penguin, 1995); for Sellier, see Pascal, *Pensées*, ed. and trans. Roger Ariew (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2005).

27 W. H. Auden, "September 1, 1939," *The Collected Poetry of W.H. Auden* (New York: Random House, 1945) 57-59, see p. 57.

28 Robin Adèle Greeley, "The Body as a Political Metaphor: Picasso and the Performance of *Guernica*," *Surrealism and the Spanish Civil War* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2006) 147-187; A. C. Grayling, *Among the Dead Cities: The History and Moral Legacy of the WWII Bombing of Civilians in Germany and Japan* (New York: Walker & Co.: Distributed to the trade by Holtzbrinck Publishers, 2006); Jörg Friedrich, *The Fire: The Bombing of Germany, 1940-1945*, trans. Allison Brown (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2006); Edwin Palmer Hoyt, *Inferno: The Firebombing of Japan, March 9-August 15, 1945* (Lanham, MD: Madison Books, 2000).

29 *Années 30 en Europe: le temps menaçant 1929 1939: exposition du 20 février au 25 mai 1997, Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris*, ed. Suzanne Pagé (Paris: Paris musées: Flammarion, 1997).

30 Letter of Georges Rouault to André Suarès (August 9, 1932), *Correspondance [de] Georges Rouault [et] André Suarès* (Paris: Gallimard, 1960) 271.

31 Peter Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity AD 150-750* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971) 74, 67n49.

32 Schloesser, "Notes on the *Miserere* plates," in this volume.

33 Charles Baudelaire, "Les Yeux de Berthe" ("Berthe: Her Eyes"), Baudelaire, *Les Fleurs du mal*, trans. Richard Howard (Brighton, Sussex: The Harvester Press Ltd., 1982), English 162; French 340.

34 Norman Bryson, review of Georges Didi-Huberman, *Devant l'Image: Question posée aux fins de l'histoire de l'art* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1990), in *The Art Bulletin* 75/2 (June 1993): 336-37, see p. 336.

35 Bryson 336. Emphasis added. I am grateful to Virginia Reinburg for providing this passage.

36 See Georges Didi-Huberman, "The Image as Rend and the Death of God Incarnate," *Confronting Images: Questioning the Ends of a Certain History of Art*, trans. John Goodman (University Park: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 2005) 138-228; orig. *Devant l'Image*, cited above. For the Holy Face and Shroud, see esp. 192-200.

37 Chapon and Rouault, *Œuvre gravé* 2:338-365.

38 The two other works (not exhibited) are *Hindenburg* (a portrait of Paul von Hindenburg who died in 1934, one year after the publication of this lithograph) and *Autumn*.

39 F.A. Cazals, *Paul Verlaine, ses portraits* (Paris: Bibliothèque de l'Association, [April] 1896).

40 Letter of Georges Rouault to André Suarès (Versailles, May 12, 1914), Rouault and Suarès, *Correspondance* 103. As Rouault uses the expression "*dessin-estampe*" only a few places, the term seems to describe a drawing or sketch that he would have made to serve as the basis for reproductions. I am grateful to Gilles Rouault for directing me to this letter and qualifying the passage. Eugène Carrière (1849-1906) was a French Symbolist. His painted portrait of Paul Verlaine, held by the Musée d'Orsay, "is one of Carrière's most famous portraits and was exhibited several times during the artist's lifetime, in Paris and Brussels…. The painting was widely circulated as an engraving by the printer Lemercié after the poet's death in 1896." http://www.musee-orsay.fr/en/collections/works-in-focus/painting/commentaire_id/paul-verlaine-2091.html. Accessed June 26, 2008.

41 Poem of Rouault sent to Auguste Marguillier, sub-editor of *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, June 1, 1914, qtd. in Dorival and Rouault, *l'Œuvre peint* 1:350.

42 See discussion of Orpheus in Schloesser, "Notes on the *Miserere* plates exhibited in *Mystic Masque*," in this volume.

43 Large Aquatints in Colors (1936-39): *Christ en Croix*; *La Baie des trépassés*; and *Automne*; Chapon and Rouault, *Œuvre gravé* 2: 230-35. The crucifixion scene was realized in the *Miserere* as *"Aimez-vous les uns les autres."* For the rejected plates see Chapon and Rouault, *Œuvre gravé* 1:318-319, plates 141 and 149.

44 *Automne* is a color version of the black and white lithograph from the 1933 set of four discussed above (OG 364). The third color lithograph is *Christ en Croix* (OG 286).

45 Paul Cézanne, *Les grandes baigneuses* (1900-05), The Barnes Foundation, Merion, PA.

46 See Naomi Blumberg in this volume.

47 On June 14, 1885, the *New York Times* reprinted a short story from *The Cornhill Magazine* entitled "By the 'Baie des Trépassés'." Its opening paragraph set the scene: "It is an eerie corner of the great Bay of Storms, that haven of the lost where almost day by day the Atlantic gives handsel of its widely gathered harvest of death… there is always a grim sense of expectation, a haunting consciousness of that weird procession of the dead, drifting ever slowly, night and day, one by one, hither." See also: http://france-for-visitors.com/brittany/finistere/baie-des-trepasses.html. Accessed June 26, 2008.

48 Paul Verlaine, "Autumn Song," *Selected Poems*, trans. Martin Sorrell (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1999) 25, 27. The poem is also famous because lines from it were used by the BBC to inform the French Resistance of the D-Day invasion.

49 "I think again / of vanished days/ and cry." Verlaine 27.

50 Psalm 50 (51):8. NSRV. French: Segond (1910). The linkage can be detected in Abbé Morel's script for his documentary film *Miserere* (1951): "Those who believe in me, says Christ, even if they should die,

will live. Lord, you will make me hear sounds of joy and gladness; my weary bones will rejoice. The bodies of all our deceased will come to life again. Arise and sing, all you now sleeping in the dust of the earth." I am grateful to the Fondation Rouault for providing a copy of this film for research purposes and to Anne Bernard Kearney for having made a full transcription of the film's text.

51 Chapon and Rouault, *Œuvre gravé* 2:53.

52 Letter of Georges Rouault to André Suarès (April 29, 1935); qtd. in Chapon and Rouault, *Œuvre gravé* 2: 53.

53 Chapon and Rouault, *Œuvre gravé* 1:319, plate 150.

54 Thomas Epstein, "In Deed and in Need: the Friendship in Art of Georges Rouault and André Suarès," in this volume.

55 André Suarès and Georges Rouault, *Passion* (Paris: Cerf, 2005) 65;

56 For identity of opposites in Jarry, see Schloesser, "Graphic Shock". I am grateful to Virginia Reinburg for pointing out the role of forgiveness in ancient executions rituals.

57 For this image by Dürer, see Schloesser, "1920-1929: Jazz Age Graphic Shock," in this volume.

58 Georges Rouault, *Stella Vespertina* (Paris: René Drouin, 1947); in Rouault, *Sur l'art et sur la vie* (Paris: Denoël, 1971) 129; qtd. in Claude Cernuschi in this volume.

59 Matthew 6:24 NRSV. "*Vous ne pouvez servir Dieu et Mamon*." French: Segond (1910).

60 E.T. Salmon, *History of the Roman World from 30 B.C. to A.D. 138*, 6th ed. (1968; New York: Routledge, 1995) 55n2.

61 Suarès and Rouault, *Passion* 95.

62 For vicarious suffering and redemption, see Stephen Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism: Mystic Modernism in Postwar Paris, 1919-1933* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 2005) 69.

63 Suarès and Rouault, *Passion* 95.

64 See "1929-1939 Cirque/Circus," Dorival and Rouault, *l'Œuvre peint* 2:163-86.

65 David Nash, *Georges Rouault: Judges, Clowns and Whores* (New York: Mitchell-Innes & Nash, 2007) 56; citing Fondation Georges Rouault.

66 Rouault qtd. in James Thrall Soby, *Georges Rouault: Paintings and Prints* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1945) 26-28.

67 Georges Rouault, preface to Charles Baudelaire and Georges Rouault, *Quatorze planches gravées pour les Fleurs du mal* (Paris: l'Étoile Filante, 1966); qtd. in Dorival and Rouault, *l'Œuvre peint* 2:327. Emphasis added.

68 Stravinsky 42; see discussion of "En marge des doctrines" above.

69 Rouault, preface to *Quatorze planches gravées*; qtd. in Dorival and Rouault, *l'Œuvre peint* 2:327.

70 Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 166-67.

71 OP 1803-1851.

72 See Schloesser, "1871-1901: Realism, Symbolism, Mystic Modernism," in this volume.

73 OP 1859-1900.

74 Perhaps Rouault, having achieved financial security and more, shared in Hannah Arendt's rejection of what she saw as Léon Bloy's claim—namely, that women "should either be saints or whores and while saints may be forced by circumstances to descend to the level of the whore, and whores may always become saints, the honest woman of bourgeois society is lost beyond salvation." Hannah Arendt, "Christianity and Revolution," *The Nation* (September 22, 1945): 288-289. I am grateful to Brenna Moore for this reference.

75 Ferlinghetti 96.

76 See Stephane Dahme in this volume.

77 Letter of André Suarès to Georges Rouault (May 21, 1922), Rouault and Suarès, *Correspondance* 174.

78 See Chapon and Rouault, *Œuvre gravé* 1:316 for legend (*...Comme il sortait du lit d'orties* [As he rose up out of his bed of nettles]) and 1:317 for cancelled plate 116. See OP 1713-1714 for variants.

79 Letters of André Suarès to Georges Rouault (May 31, 1939; July 23, 1939), Rouault and Suarès, *Correspondance* 323, 324; English translation from Georges Rouault and André Suarès, *Georges Rouault—André Suarès Correspondence, 1911-1939*, trans. and ed. Alice B. Low-Beer (Ilfracombe, Devon: A.H. Stockwell, 1983) 132-33.

80 "Vision is given and vision received, projected and inflicted back, and the poet is simultaneously seer and seen. The two sets of seeing, eyes, 'Je vois' and 'Son regard,' are the poles within which woman (or more generally the force of the feminine) and the poetic mind ('femme en esprit') are contained and contest the destiny of their relationship. More significantly, this is the place where, as in *Sed non satiata*, looks are reversed and the balance between self and other is tipped." Peter Broome, *Baudelaire's Poetic Patterns: The Secret Language of 'Les Fleurs du Mal'* (Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1999) 103-04.

81 Dorival and Rouault, *l'Œuvre peint* 2:156-59; see also 2:205.

82 For studies, see OP 1695-1698. The piece in this exhibition is OP 1698. For abandoned engraving see Chapon and Rouault, *Œuvre gravé* 1:318, plate 143.

83 "*Une seule chose domine chez moi, l'entraînement et l'ardeur la plus grande vers l'abstraction*." Gustave Moreau, *Ecrits sur l'art par Gustave Moreau*, ed. Cooke 1:53; qtd. in Jeffery Howe in this volume.

84 Although the Dayton museum lists the work as having been completed around 1920, we would note that the catalogue raisonné (OP 1687) assigns a completion date of 1939.

85 OP 1687. The other four variants (OP 1688-1691) all have the simplified title *Our Lady of the Ends of the Earth* which might also translate as "Land's End" or "Where the World Ends."

86 See Schloesser, "Notes on the *Miserere* plates exhibited in *Mystic Masque*," in this volume.

87 Pascal, *Pensées*: Plèiade 717/Lafuma 919/Sellier 749.

88 For abandoned engraving see Chapon and Rouault, *Œuvre gravé* 1:319, plate 148. Appropriately, *Verlaine* is placed next to *Automne*, plate 149.

89 Verlaine, "Un Conte," dedicated to J.-K. Huysmans, *Œuvres poétiques complètes*, eds. Yves-Gérard Le Dantec and Jacques Borel, rev. ed. (1962; Paris: Gallimard, 1968) 410-412, see p. 412.

90 *Christ en croix.* Exécuté en 1939 par Hebert-Stevens en trois exemplaires; in Dorival and Rouault, *l'Œuvre peint* 2:301.

91 Auden 57.

Hieratic Grandeur: Weightless World, Hidden Order, Magnifying the Modest, 1930–1943

Gael Mooney and Stephen Schloesser

> ... any thinking person realizes that the appearances of beauty are signs of an invisible loveliness... Material lights are images of the outpouring of an immaterial gift of light. The thoroughness of sacred discipleship indicates the immense contemplative capacity of the mind.
>
> He revealed all this to us...so that he might lift us in spirit up through the perceptible to the conceptual, from sacred shapes and symbols to the simple peaks of the hierarchies of heaven.
> —Dionysius the Areopagite[1]
>
> A wise man once said, "There is no longer any mystery." One can be very wise and foolish at the same time. All is imponderable in the spiritual realm the artist seeks to explore, but there reigns a hidden order that is more true than that pertaining to weight and measure.
> —Georges Rouault[2]

In his introduction to *Georges Rouault* (1954), Jacques Maritain wrote that Rouault's work was "raised to hieratic grandeur" through "the inspiration of his faith, and of the contemplative promptings that were his hidden treasure."[3] As one might expect of Maritain's precision in language, both words—grandeur and hieratic—evoke multiple layers of meaning. The word "grandeur" immediately recalls the towering figure of Blaise Pascal. Reflecting on *le grandeur et la misère* (the grandeur and misery; the greatness and wretchedness), Pascal wrote that the grandeur of humanity is that it is capable of knowing that it is wretched (*misèrable*).[4]

More suggestive still is Maritain's use of the word "hieratic." The hieratic style, a strain of certain Egyptian, Byzantine and Romanesque works, conveyed deeply coded meanings in nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Paris. Employed by advocates of an ultramontanist Catholic aesthetic, it was used to designate and define an authentically "religious" style. This ideological program became so successful that even the laicist Third Republic followed it when it needed to complete the Panthéon's mosaics *à la* ancient Ravenna.[5] As early as 1920, Maritain, drawing especially on the "neo-traditionalist" aesthetics of Maurice Denis (1870-1943), used the "hieratic" as an anti-naturalist weapon, justifying his attack on the ideology of "art imitating nature" by going back to the early Middle Ages.[6]

Although he did not share Maritain's estimation of Auguste Rodin,[7] Rouault, a disciple and advocate of Paul Cézanne, shared this more symbolic conception of both his friend Maritain as well as Denis.[8] As many images of Veronica's veil created throughout his life demonstrate, Rouault had been experimenting with the hieratic style in his representations of the face of Christ as early as 1904—an innovation probably catalyzed by his encounter with Paul Vignon's photographs of the Holy Shroud published in 1902.[9] What can be said definitively is that Maritain's aesthetic theory laid out in *Art and Scholasticism* (1920), emphasizing hieraticism as an essential component,[10] was heavily indebted to his conversations with Rouault. Their mutual indebtedness to the ultramontanist aesthetic can be seen in their evocations of the movement's iconic figure, Fra Angelico (ca. 1395-1455). Maurice Denis had written that the means to restoring painting was "to restore to honor the aesthetic of Fra Angelico, who alone is truly Catholic; who alone responds to the aspirations of the pious, mystic souls who love God."[11] Rouault imagined a silence filled "with images and sounds and unexplored vastness, and with delightful groves like those of a Fra Angelico."[12] To avant-garde artists who felt the deadly allure of fame, Maritain suggested they turn to Fra Angelico who "felt none of these interior contradictions."[13]

It is hardly surprising, then, that Rouault would adopt the hieratic style for his post-1902 depictions of the face of Christ and, later, for saintly figures and biblical scenes. Far more puzzling, however, is the question of why he adopted the hieratic—a style normally reserved for numinous subjects—in order to portray clowns and other figures marginalized by society. As social outcasts, the circus performers would seem to be the very antithesis of all that society deems to be admirable and filled with "grandeur." Easily overlooked, this is clearly one of Rouault's most revolutionary aspects and it is central to the paradox his work embodies.

What at first glance appears illogical soon becomes self-evident when we realize that the religious vision embraced by Rouault—i.e., the Catholicism of Léon Bloy—was one marked primarily by inversion.[14] (James Keenan puts in more simply in his essay in the present volume: "Inversion is another name for Catholic."[15]) In the first monograph dedicated solely to Rouault (and published the year he approached his fiftieth birthday), we find the artist's understanding of inversion in his own words:

> Human grandeur is the negation of all that human beings generally deem to be great and admirable. However, a truth hidden at the core of our being sometimes makes us have a premonition of true beauty, true grandeur. The most noble subjects are humbled by a low spirit, while modest and simple realities are raised up and magnified. An art deemed to be inferior has suddenly found its redemption.[16]

In addition to his evocation of Pascal, Rouault paraphrased the Gospel canticle identified by its initial Latin word: *Magnificat* (magnifies). When Mary hears her cousin Elizabeth's greeting hailing Mary as the God-bearer, Mary sings:

> Magnificat anima mea Dominum
> Et exultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo....
> Deposuit potentes de sede et exaltavit humiles.[17]

Rouault's understanding of human grandeur, both Pascalian and scriptural, emphasizes ironic reversal and the inversion of the given order: the mighty are shoved off their thrones while the lowly are lifted up. Moreover, this inversion of the present order leads to a vision—"a truth hidden at the core of our being"—which seems to be available only to the marginalized who can now see from an exalted vantage point—"a premonition of true beauty, true grandeur."

Rouault's hieratic depictions of his circus figures reveal them to be not merely passing diversions meant to amuse; rather, they are the agents of this very process of unveiling hidden truth and true grandeur. Rouault introduces the leading clown figure of *Cirque de l'Étoile filante* (1938) by giving him this task: "Master Weary Bones, explain

to these curious Byzantines and sarcastic dawdlers the meaning of Beauty, Art and of encompassing Life."[18] Like Nietzsche's world-weary congenitally gray-haired youth,[19] Rouault's "Byzantines" (as he glosses later) are those who were "classical before birth": immovable in their judgments and invincibly sure of themselves, they "keep their eyes closed with regard to all incorrect movement."[20]

As opposed to these inflexible types so highly esteemed by society, the lowly circus performers are "happy peaceful conquerors," who travel "the roads of the *Île de France*, steering [their] way from north to south, from east to west." Possessing no single place to call their own, the road is their home: they are "attached to the pictorial globe as the peasant to his land."[21] Even their self-identities are on loan as they negate themselves in the act of self-masking, concealing their nomadic lives so as to bring joy into the lives of others. Through their gravity-defying feats they reconfigure the everyday, transporting us to a more elevated plane in which there reigns a different order—that of "color and harmony…Miousic!"[22]

Rouault's exaltation of his clowns to "hieratic grandeur" in the 1930s draws the viewer into the unmasking of hidden truth that his troupe, led by "Weary Bones," is tasked with revealing. Unlike the transitory and fleeting effects of impressionist light, Rouault's retrieval of Gothic light defies our human perceptions. Like his post-Impressionist mentor Cézanne, Rouault uses light to serve as a bridge to a contemplative experience. Perhaps drawing on the fiercely French tradition embodied in the ancient royal abbey church of Saint Denis on the outskirts of Paris, Rouault's work echoes the "light mysticism" of Abbot Suger, based in turn on the medieval identification of Saint Denis of Paris with Pseudo-Dionysius, the mystic of illumination.[23] The gravity-defying weightlessness transports us beyond the positivistic world of "weights and measures" to experience that vision from above—to that "spiritual realm the artist is seeking to explore" in which "there reigns a hidden order that is more true than that pertaining to weight and measure."[24] One might go further and suggest that Rouault's circus figures embody Suger's twofold vision: "the 'analogical' nature of beauty (its partaking of a mystical prototype) and the 'anagogical' purpose of art (its ability to raise the mind to the perception of ultimate truth)."[25]

Cirque 1930

An initial step in the evolution of Rouault's hieratic style can be seen by comparing the circus finished in 1930 with those of his earlier periods. Rouault had been fascinated with the subject of circus performers since the early 1900s, and they fit within his larger scheme of two main character types: the protagonists (including circus figures) who are agile, contorted, and even frenzied, wrestling to free themselves from the constraints of this life; and those self-satisfied who, comfortable with present conditions, have grown too rigid and obese to move at all.[26] Moreover, the very earliest depictions of circus performers are painted in a style that evokes the "action painting" emerging fifty years later (*Clown* [1907] and *Clown* [1907 or 1908]).[27]

However, the circus performers depicted from 1929 onward do not seem to fit within either of these two categories; in fact, they seem to represent a radical departure from the 1902-1929 period.[28] On the one hand, they express not their individual autonomy but their conformity to a hidden order. On the other hand, their static poses and ordered conformity do not express the self-satisfied incapacity to move of earlier antagonists. This conformity is something new: paradoxically, the outward frieze is a sign of inward spiritual flexibility, "the negation of all that human beings generally deem to be great and admirable."[29] The balanced harmony of poses makes their movements appear to be pre-ordained according to a mysterious order.

The circus performers of *Cirque* (1930) are thin, angular, seemingly weightless entities. The hieratic poses of their bodies, lending both grace and solemnity, recall Egyptian sculpture—and, as Angela Lampe has recently discovered, Rouault did in fact use Egyptian priestly paintings and sculpture from the Louvre as his models (**fig. 1**).[30] This static frieze-like character had special significance for Rouault: "I saw the whole ballet troupe in movement: friezes, bas-reliefs, facades, compositions

Fig. 1. Postcard of.... from Rouault's personal archives. Photo courtesy Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris.

inscribed in space. The mind was carried far away from a physical spectacle. The bodies swayed to the cadence of collective rhythmic movements—verticals of high-rising flame or long horizontal rhythms. What joy that was for an artist!"[31]

Whereas Rouault's figures prior to this time exert a powerful presence by occupying most of the picture plane, in the 1930 series the circus performers' diminutive size relative to the surrounding space signals their simplicity and modesty. Their poses reflect a life that is ordered, not according to material norms "pertaining to weight and measure" but according to a "hidden order that is more true." Even the somber palette of *Cirque*, consisting primarily of earth tones, reflects the humble lives lived close to the ground under the circus tent: "silent and deserted ring, the ring of ochre and honey."[32]

Unlike the contorted poses of Rouault's early wrestlers, who stretch their limbs to the four corners of the picture, the circus performers are both self-contained and self-deferential in their interactions with others, exemplifying Rouault's own *magnificat*: "The most noble subjects are humbled by a low spirit." For example, the two main performers featured in *Parade* (**no. 38b**) bow their heads when greeting each other in a sign of mutual respect. Similarly, the adult performer in *Clown and Infant* (**no. 38e**) gently places his arm around the child performer in an expression of tender and loving concern. Even when the clowns take center stage they seem to deflect attention away from themselves: while perfecting their routines, the *Clown with a Bass Drum* (**no. 38a**) and the *Yellow Clown* (**no. 38f**) look off to the sidelines, apparently unaware of the onlooker's admiring gaze.

Key to Rouault's hieratic depictions is a horizontal red bar that is introduced in this 1930 series.[33] Its initial role is anecdotal, indicating the dancer's bar in *The Ballerina* (**no. 38d**) and the oblique line of the stage in *Clown and Infant* (**no. 38e**). The red bar is also seen as identical with the horizontal plane on which *The Old Clown* (**no. 38h**) sits, functioning as that which helps him maintain balance. This old clown presents the viewer with yet another paradox: he stands out as the only figure in this series depicted both frontally and up close, but his body's roundness seems out of sync not only with all the other younger muscle-toned clowns—and with the hieratic style more generally—it is also out of sync even with his own head, depicted in a full frontal pose.

His body would seem to be Rouault's own at age fifty-nine. It reminds us of the contrasts Rouault related in his letter to Edouard Schuré twenty-five years earlier, contrasts that intentionally echoed those in Baudelaire's prose poem, "The Old Saltimbanque."[34] Both Rouault and Baudelaire had recalled sudden moments of self-realization: the outward semblance of the circus—"these brilliant scintillating things made to amuse"—contrasted horribly with the inward reality of the homeless life on the road—"this life of infinite sadness, if seen from slightly above." Rouault recalled suddenly realizing that the old vagabond "clown was me, was us, nearly all of us...we are all *more or less clowns*, we all wear a 'glittering costume.'"[35] By staring directly at the viewer, Rouault's *Old Clown* composed a quarter-century later seems to be a self-portrait. It invites the viewer to experience the same kind of Baudelairean *dédoublement* that Rouault experienced as a younger man: a self-

identification in another provoking self-awareness and self-knowledge.

Far from the noisy and boisterous atmosphere one normally associates with life under the circus tent, the series of prints made in connection with *Cirque* are quiet images that evoke a world removed from the flow of daily life. Through these images, Rouault seeks to revive a "paradise lost" from his Belleville childhood:

> Circus of my youth
> for the poor child of the suburbs
> little waif worn down by poverty
> the lights of the circus are my sun,
> the orient of my heart
> Perhaps, who knows,
> the reflection of paradise lost?[36]

Cirque de l'Étoile filante (1935/1938)

A second set of circus figures completed by 1935 were published as the *Cirque de l'Étoile filante* (The Shooting Star Circus) in 1938. By the time he was at work on these images the world had ominously changed. The Great Depression, triggered by the market collapse of 1929, had brought hardship and despair throughout the world. Adolph Hitler had capitalized on this despair and come to power in 1933; the Spanish Civil War, a local theater of a larger war pitting the fascists (Hitler and Mussolini) against the communists (supplied by Josef Stalin), would begin in 1936; France itself, terrified of the fascist threat, would vote in the socialist Popular Front that same year, a leftist springtime that would quickly collapse.

Rouault, almost sixty-five years old, responded to this external chaos by producing a circus work even more imitative of the hieratic style. The plates for the *Cirque de l'Étoile filante* (**nos. 45a–q**) are more ordered, more harmonious than those in *Cirque* (**no. 38a–h**). In addition to profile images that continue to make use of Egyptian sculptural forms, more of these figures are now depicted in the full frontal style reminiscent of Byzantine icons. Depicted up close, they focus our attention on their conformity to the works' formal arrangements. This series reveals a hidden world vastly removed from the all too visible one unraveling throughout the 1930s.

In the images made for the *Cirque de l'Étoile filante*, Rouault amplifies all of this to make "us have a premonition of true beauty, true grandeur."[37] One is immediately struck by the brilliant colors of these works—faithfully reproduced by Rouault's newly discovered printer, Roger Lacourière.[38] They glow with shimmering light that seems to emanate from the interior of the forms, casting reflected light throughout each picture. At the very outset of the series, Rouault added to the two figures in the *Frontispièce-Parade* (**no. 45a**) a luminous blue line down the center of the print, a reflected light illuminating the behavior of each mirrored in the other.

Light was a central interest for Rouault, and as early as 1914 he sensed it: "I have the impression ... that the path I am following will lead to a great evolution, through LIGHT, in my painting—even in the caricatures.... *Change—complete transformation!*"[39] Much like the Gothic metaphysics of light theorized by Abbot Suger and realized in his new abbey church of Saint-Denis,[40] Rouault's light in these works of the mid- to late-1930s seemingly negates the material by depriving it of weight and substance.[41] The result is a light that is all-diffusive, provoking a feeling of overall transparency and brilliance. By rejecting the more naturalistic lighting effects associated with chiaroscuro (that defines volume through light and shadow), this anti-naturalistic light underscores the symbolic role of the masked performers who unmask hidden truths. This combination of color and lighting imparts a sense not of depth but of transparency.

In contrast to the images from *Cirque* emphasizing the modest and melancholic aspects of life under the circus tent, the brilliant colors and more harmoniously ordered compositions of the *Cirque de l'Étoile filante* elevate the viewer by revealing:

> Form, color, harmony,
> Oasis or mirage
> For the eye, the heart, the mind.[42]

Douce-amère (Bitter-Sweet; **no. 45n**) embodies this process of uplifting. The long column of her neck draws the eye upward, as does the twisting of her body, which moves in the opposite direction from her head. In the midst of all this motion, the inner dynamism of her hieratic pose is resolved in the stillness of her head that merges with the top of the picture plane. She symbolizes this inversion of the given order that makes us rise up to see the world from a more elevated perspective.

The red bar that appeared in 1930 now takes on added significance: as one of the two main axes according to which the work is organized, it is now key to the work's formal arrangement and harmony of the whole. This transition is particularly striking when comparing the two versions of the *Little Equestrienne* made for the two series. In the *Equestrienne/Amazon* (**no. 38g**), the horizontal bar, painted in somber tones, is a barely visible detail in the background. In *Little Equestrienne* (**no. 45c**), the bar is the animating principle of the work: it imparts rhythm, balance, and harmony, thereby allowing the colors and forms to attain fulfillment and amplitude. In *Master Arthur* (**no. 45g**), the red bar bisects the figures arms so as to provide balance and support. By positioning his arms to echo the triangular shape of the bar and stage behind him, he demonstrates physical balance and conformity to a hidden order.

As the leading protagonist in this process of unveiling the truths, *Weary Bones* (**no. 45j**) is the paradigm of harmony. With apparent grace and ease, he balances the pyramidal shape of the stage formed by the horizontal bar and overhanging curtains on his shoulders. Yet, there are now two horizontal bars, one at the level of the shoulders and another below his hips, an echo of the *Old Clown* from 1930. Although "Weary Bones" would seem to be the same age as "The Old Clown," he now appears younger, more muscular and agile, standing upright—with the balance bar still just below his hips.

He would seem to be Rouault once again, five years later—but now rejuvenated in some hidden internal manner.[43] As intimated by Abbé Morel's 1951 documentary on Rouault (made for the artist's eightieth birthday), the "weary bones" probably refer to a later line in Psalm 51 (*Miserere*):

> Let me hear joy and gladness;
> let the bones [les os] you have crushed
> rejoice.[44]

These are the "Weary Bones" (*tristes os*) into which new life has been breathed. And they are to conduct Rouault to his end: "Master Weary Bones, my compatriot, I wish the circus ring to be my cemetery, provided that it offers flight to the Milky Way."[45]

Angela Lampe has called attention to at least one of Rouault's *inachevés* in which the red bar functions as the horizontal plank of the cross on which Christ is crucified.[46] This suggests significances that might be drawn from parallels between two clowns in the *Cirque de l'Étoile filante* and a figure of Christ from the contemporaneous *Passion* (completed 1936; published 1939, **nos. 47a–q**). The horizontal bar bisects the heads of both the *Black Pierrot* and *Bitter Lemon* (**nos. 45h** and **45n**), and *Bitter Lemon* emphasizes the motif by moving his head so that his nose appears to be literally fastened to the bar. Rouault adopts a similar composition for his *Christ in Profile* (**no. 47b**) from the *Passion*, seating the figure of Christ with outstretched arms before the same horizontal bar. By using the same format for his depictions of performers as that of Christ, Rouault underscores their role as "beaten dogs, loyal dogs," who "walk in the shadow of Jesus."[47] Christ functions as the archetype for negation and hence true grandeur.[48]

Perhaps the most striking parallel between the 1935 and 1936 figures is the *Pierrot* who stands impassively with downcast eyes and arms at his side (**no. 45f**). He conveys the same attitude of serene contemplation as *Ecce Homo* (**no. 47d**), a popular medieval motif whose name comes from the passion narrative in which Pilate presents the mocked Christ, ironically masked in royal trappings (crown and purple cloak), to the crowd:

> So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, ecce homo ("Behold the man!")
> (John 19:5)

For both Pierrot and Christ, Rouault employs the hieratic arrangement to convey inward contemplation, calling to mind Peter Brown's description of Late Antiquity:

> This art is not "otherworldly": it is "innerworldly." Far from abandoning the grace and individuality of the body, the portraits of the later empire gather up this body round the doors by which one can pass straight from the body into a man's mind.... To the Late Antique philosophers, the world had, admittedly, become mysterious. They contemplated its beauty with sad thoughts, like the last fragile evening-glow of a long-set sun. But this universe, though mysterious, was meaningful: it was a sign from God.[49]

Divertissement (1943)

The title of *Divertissement* returns us to our opening reflections on Pascal's central paradoxes of human grandeur and misery (or wretchedness). Human beings cannot sit still, cannot be ourselves, cannot contemplate; our anxiety compels us to seek out distractions (*divertissements*) among which the courtroom and the battlefield stand out. Paradoxically, the turn to warfare only exacerbates the situation, making us incapable of the contemplative quiet and self-reflection that made us anxious in the first place.[50] Rouault wrote *Divertissement* during his exile from occupied Paris, and he refers to its circus performers as "my friends" who are similarly exiled "Far from the academies without too much bias...."[51] The figures in these works seem to alternate between the desire for contemplative self-reflection and the noisy world of contest and competition.[52]

Divertissement contains just two figures depicted in the full frontal style reminiscent of Byzantine icons, and their characters are polar opposites. On the one hand, the open and transparent face of *Kindly Bernard* (**no. 65j**), impassive in expression, reflects an attitude of self-transformation and contemplation. By contrast, the figure enigmatically entitled *Quiquengrogne* (**no. 65k**) expresses the brusque manner of François Villon, the rogue medieval poet whose character plays throughout *Divertissement*.[53] Set within its original context, his title roughly translates as "What the hell" or perhaps even "They can go to hell."[54] Even more curiously, the figure's features are unmistakably those of Christ: he wears a costume that is both red (for suffering, see *Ecco Dolor* [Behold the Man of Sorrows, 1936]) and purple (for royalty, the garment in which Christ was mocked). In place of a crown of thorns, however, *Quiquengrogne* wears a triangular hat reminiscent of the naval hat (of the Napoleon-Lord Nelson era) worn by *The Last Romantic* (1937, **no. 50**). Setting *Kindly Bernard* and *Quiquengrogne* side-by-side, we are reminded of Waldemar George's 1924 evocation of Villon, saying that "the soul of the great French poet, mystic and bawdy at the same time," had taken up residence in Rouault.[55] The 72-year-old Rouault seems to have come to grips with the fact that his own character, like Victor Hugo's Middle Ages, was Janus-faced: simultaneously Saint Bernard and "Whatthehell," cathedral and dungeon, mystic and militant, gentle and acerbic—*Douce-amère* (sweet-bitter).

Another such pairing is found in *Les deux Têtus* (Two Stubborn Men; **no. 65m**) and *Les deux Anciens* (Two Elders; **no. 65n**). The two stubborn men engage in a game of one-upmanship—compare *Le Renchéri* (One up-man-ship; **no. 45l**)—their forms colliding with each other, perhaps even wrestling with one another (with the forearm extended). Caught up with "so many precarious interests and "stuck on a name," writes Rouault, neither will "cease or step back an inch in the face of his adversary."[56] By contrast, the two "elders" also face one another—yet they do in a diminished state that expresses their modesty. They respect the confines of the narrow space as well as one another, harmoniously balanced by the thin black line. Their self-negation points to a world of peace and harmony that lies beyond the war-like distractions engaged in by the stubborn.

Even more suggestively, the two elders almost reflect or mirror one another, their differentiation from one another being slight color contrasts in hats. They remind the viewer of Rouault's *Judges*

(1938) from his illustrations for Baudelaire's *Fleurs du Mal* (**no. 46g**). Once again, two figures almost reflect or mirror one another: on the right, a judge wears his black hat and red robe; on the left, the colors are inverted and the mouth is open, the teeth and large eye sockets suggesting the judge's skeletal double. Whether the double represents the judge's deathly apparition or the face of the man he has condemned is not entirely clear. According to either interpretation, the skeletal double exemplifies Baudelaire's theory of *dédoublement*, a moment in which we are confronted by a situation that makes us "double" our consciousness and look at ourselves, as it were, from an external standpoint. We let go of our subjective perceptions and approach the world—including ourselves—from an externalized objective standpoint. "The reason I gave my judges such woeful faces," Rouault said, "was doubtless because I expressed the anguish that I myself feel when I see one human obliged to judge another. And when I mistook the judge's face for that of the defendant, I was merely betraying my own distress. For nothing in the world would I accept the position of the judge."[57]

Combining the judicial pair in *Fleurs du mal* (1938) with the circus pairings in *Divertissement* (1943), we can see that Rouault recognized the doubling act as entailing both a social/ethical aspect as well as a contemplative one. *Dédoublement* is a moment in which we see more accurately both ourselves and those who confront us. It can also be a moment of compassion that carries us beyond our limited perceptions and judgments and acts as a bridge to a higher plane of consciousness that can contemplate divine beauty.

Conclusion

We began with Pascal; Baudelaire provides a fitting way to conclude. Baudelaire famously defined both beauty and modernity as being doubly composed of two elements: on the one hand, an element that is transient, fleeting and contingent; on the other hand, an element that is eternal. If the circus figures in his work from 1902-1928 primarily represent the rough-and-tumble world of endless turbulence, those beginning with *Cirque* in 1929-30 and continuing through *Cirque de l'Étoile filante* (1935) through *Divertissement* (1943) depict the second element—namely, the eternal. Rouault explicitly understood his own artisanry of modern beauty in Baudelairean terms: "Our art finds its equilibrium between two worlds, that of the contemplative (a word out of fashion) and the objective world. The two are able to be confused with one another and not be disentangled."[58]

Endnotes

1 Pseudo-Dionysius, "The Celestial Hierarchy," *Pseudo-Dionysius, The Complete Works* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1987) 146, 147.

2 Georges Rouault, "Stella Vespertina" (1947), *Sur l'art et sur la vie* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971) 108. The phrase of the "wise man" Rouault quotes came from the chemist, Marcelin Berthelot. It was a favorite of the *renouveau catholique* and served to sum up Catholicism's vehement opposition to positivism. See Stephen Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism: Mystic Modernism in Postwar Paris, 1919-1933* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 2005) 26, 91.

3 Jacques Maritain, *Georges Rouault* (1954; New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1969) 34.

4 For Pascal see essay of Margaret Miles in present volume. Note that the title of Maritain's own essay for the first issue of his *Chroniques* in the *Roseau d'or* series was entitled "Grandeur et misère de la métaphysique" (The Grandeur and misery of metaphysics). See Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 182.

5 See Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 28-30.

6 See Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 148-151.

7 For Maritain, see Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 150; for Rouault, see Naomi Blumberg essay in present volume.

8 For the Maritain-Rouault friendship, see essay by Bernard Doering in present volume.

9 For Rouault and Vignon, see essays of James Keenan, Nora Possenti Ghiglia, and Virginia Reinburg in present volume.

10 Stephen Schloesser summarizes Maritain's use of the hieratic in *Art and Scholasticism* (1920): "'Medieval art was naturally, instinctively, protected against naturalism…by the hieratic traditions which came to it from the Byzantines': it did not 'copy the materiality of nature,' nor did 'it copy immoveable suprasensible exemplars,' being rather 'astonishingly indifferent to material regularity and geometrical correctness.' Whether or not Maritain knew enough art history to know that Romanesque artists eschewed mimetic resemblance in an attempt to get at the *res*—that is, *the thing itself*—he genially used the medievals in service of his own quasi-Bergsonian project. Art, and especially twentieth-century formalist and abstract art, provided privileged and immediate access to the most truly *real*," Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 150.

11 Maurice Denis in Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 159.

12 Rouault, "Stella Vespertina," *Georges Rouault,* Pierre Courthion (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1962) 294.

13 Maritain in Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 159.

14 See Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 69-70.

15 See essay of James Keenan in present volume.

16 Rouault, "Toque noir, robe rouge," *Georges Rouault,* Michel Puy (Paris: Éditions de "la Nouvelle Revue Française," 1920); *Sur l'art et sur la vie* 65.

17 "And Mary said, 'My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,…He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly." Luke 1: 46-47, 52 (New Revised Standard Version). For context, see Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 234.

18 Georges Rouault, *Cirque de l'Étoile filante* (Paris: Ambroise Vollard, 1938) 12. Translation author's. For an accessible reproduction of this original volume, see Rouault, *Cirque de l'Étoile filante: eaux-fortes originales et dessins gravés sur bois de Georges Rouault* (Paris: Cerf: Fondation Georges Rouault, 2005).

19 Friedrich Nietzsche wrote in 1874: "'The absurdity and superstition,' these skeptics say, 'suit men like ourselves, who…fulfill Hesiod's prophecy that men will one day be born gray-headed, and that Zeus will destroy that generation as soon as the sign is visible.' Historical culture is really a kind of inherited grayness, and those who have borne its mark from childhood must believe instinctively in *the old age of mankind*." Nietzsche, *The Use and Abuse of History*, trans. Adrian Collins (1949; New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1957) 48.

20 As Anne Davenport writes in her essay for the present volume: "'Byzantines' for Rouault is a pejorative term used to describe those who consider themselves to be 'classical before birth' and who are 'asleep on their pillows of golden misery, sure of themselves, their eyes closed with regard to all incorrect movement, having engraved in a powerful acid and invincible program on their brains.'" They have therefore lost the ability to appreciate the "*je ne sais quoi*… this marvelous and strong instinct for life…this shiver that comes from so far away and that goes still further beyond" that is beauty's earthly reflection. Rouault, *Cirque de l'Étoile filante* 13. Translation author's.

21 Rouault, *Cirque de l'Etoile filante* 10. Translation author's.

22 *Divertissement*, 11. Translation author's.

23 Through various errors in identification, St. Denis of Paris came to be identified with Pseudo-Dionysius—an identification so central to and strong in Capetian ideology that "Abelard narrowly escaped a trial for treason against the crown itself when, as a monk at St.-Denis [Abbey], he dared to suggest that the Apostle of France was not the same person as the Areopagite." See Otto von Simson, *The Gothic Cathedral: Origins of Gothic Architecture & the Medieval*

Concept of Order, 3rd ed. (1956; Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1988) 106.

24 Georges Rouault, "Stella Vespertina" (1947), cited above.

25 von Simson 115.

26 See Naomi Blumberg essay in present volume.

27 See Jean-Marie Tézé essay in present volume.

28 The figures completed in 1930 were intended for an illustrated book entitled *Cirque* that was eventually abandoned due to Ambroise Vollard's concern over André Suarès's anti-American text. See Thomas Epstein essay in present volume. It should also be noted that Rouault had resumed painting in 1928 after years occupied solely with graphic works (*Miserere*; *Fleurs du mal*; *Réincarnations du Père Ubu*). The newly hieratic circus figures coincide with this return to painting. See Soo Kang essay in the present volume.

29 Rouault, "Toque noir, robe rouge," cited above.

30 Angela Lampe, "Work in progress. Les œuvres inachevées," *Georges Rouault, forme, couleur, harmonie,* catalogue published for the Musée d'art moderne et contemporain de Strasbourg exhibition, 10 November 2006 to 18 March 2007, commissariat Fabrice Hergott (Strasbourg: Musées de Strasbourg, 2006) 214-221.

31 These lines concern the Ballets Russes for whom Rouault designed the decor for the production of *Le Fils Prodigue* (*The Prodigal Son*) by Sergei Prokofiev and George Balanchine in 1929. Rouault, "Stella Vespertina" (1947), François Chapon and Isabelle Rouault, *Rouault: oeuvre gravé*, 2 vols. (Monte-Carlo: Éditions André Sauret, 1978) 2:49.

32 Rouault, *Cirque de l'Étoile filante* 11.

33 Lampe 219.

34 See Stephen Schloesser essay in present volume.

35 Letter of Georges Rouault to Edouard Schuré (1905), *Sur l'art et sur la vie* 150.

36 Georges Rouault, *Les Peintres du Cirque*, preface by Jean Cocteau (Paris: Cirque d'Hiver, 1927); in Chapon and Rouault, *Œuvre gravé* 2:49.

37 Rouault, "Toque noir, robe rouge," cited above.

38 *L'Atelier Lacourière-Frelaut: ou, 50 ans de gravure et d'imprimerie en taille-douce: 1929-1979: [exposition], Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris, 17 mai-7 octobre 1979* (Paris: Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris, 1979); Kneeland McNulty and Massey Trotter, *Roger Lacouriere, engraver & master printer; catalogue of an exhibition October 18-November 26, 1949 at the New York Public Library* (New York: The Institute, 1949).

39 Unpublished letter from Georges Rouault to Josef Florian, Versailles, 36 rue de l'Orangerie (March 28, 1914), Chapon and Rouault, *Œuvre gravé* 1:56.

40 Otto von Simson writes: "In the words of Suger's description, at once ecstatic and accurate, 'the entire sanctuary is thus pervaded by a wonderful and continuous light entering through the most sacred windows'—Suger's celebrated stained-glass windows with which the history of Gothic glass may be said to begin." Suger, von Simpson adds later, "was infatuated with light. The inscription on the door of his new abbey called attention to the surpassing beauty of the luminous and to its theological significance.... Anticipating the completion of the nave in the same translucent style that he had given to the choir, he says: 'Once the new rear part is joined to the part in front, the [whole] church shines with its middle part [the nave] brightened. For bright is that which is brightly coupled with the bright. And bright is the noble edifice that is pervaded by the new light.' The last sentence is ambivalent, inasmuch as *lux nova* also refers to Christ and thus to the symbolic or 'anagogical' significance of the physical light," 100, 119.

41 The Gothic light at Saint-Denis is transparent and all-pervasive, making the stone appear to glow from within with an interior light. The transparency of the light also makes the stone seem to be weightless while the verticality of the architecture defies gravity and similarly leads the eye upward. The light transports us to another realm so that Suger can say we "suddenly find ourselves dwelling in some strange universe that neither entirely in the slime of the earth nor entirely in the purity of Heaven." Suger in Abbot Suger and Erwin Panofsky, *Abbot Suger on the Abbey Church of St.-Denis and its Art Treasures* (1946; Princeton Univ. Press, 1979) 21.

Rouault's late work produces this same effect. Hence, it both negates and inverts the given material order. As von Simson explains: "Light, which is ordinarily concealed by matter, appears as the active principle; and matter is aesthetically real only insofar as it partakes of, and is defined by, the luminous quality of light," 4.

42 Georges Rouault, dedication lines in the *Miserere* (1948), Chapon and Rouault, *Œuvre gravé*, 1:75.

43 "These are the reflections of the master of the 'Tristes-Os' (I myself am sometimes 'Tristes-Os'), from a *traveling circus perhaps*." Unpublished letter of Georges Rouault to André Suarès (4 May 1932), Chapon and Rouault, *Œuvre gravé* 2:47.

44 Psalm 51:8. "Fais-moi entendre l'allégresse et la joie, afin que les os que tu as brisés se réjouissent" (Darby); "auditum mihi facies gaudium et laetitiam ut exultent ossa quae confregisti" (Latin Vulgate).

45 Rouault, *Cirque de l'Étoile filante* 30.

46 Lampe 220, fig. 16.

47 Rouault, *Cirque de l'Étoile filante* 16.

48 Hans Urs von Balthasar makes this inversion the cornerstone of his theological aesthetics: "This law extends to the inclusion in Christian beauty of even the Cross and everything else which a worldly aesthetics (even of a realistic kind) discards as no longer bearable.... Our task, rather, consists in coming...to see his 'formlessness' as a mode of his glory because a mode of his 'love to the end,' to discover in his de-Formation (*Ungestalt*) the mystery of trans-Formation (*Übergestalt*)." Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, trans. Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis, ed. Joseph Fessio and John Riches, 7 vols. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press; New York: Crossroad Publications, 1983-91) 1:124, 160.

49 Peter Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity AD 150-750* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971) 74, 75.

50 See Schloesser essay in present volume.

51 Georges Rouault, *Divertissement* (Paris: Tériade "Éditions de la revue Verve," 1943) 11.

52 Rouault understood this tension well: "It is essential to *withdraw*—and to flee confusion—to collect one's thoughts far from disorder and the strains incurred in fighting against the dispersal of abortive efforts which result in a lack of unity of conception, however modest that may be—...." Letter from Georges Rouault to Maurice Heine (postmarked Saint-Malo, September 6, 1932), Chapon and Rouault, *Œuvre gravé*, 2:49.

53 See Anne Davenport essay in this volume.

54 Rouault has taken "Quiquengrogne" from the name of the tower in Saint-Malo where he liked to stay by the sea. The Duchess Ann of Brittany, Queen of France, had the "Quic-en-Groigne" tower erected. Its name derives from the queen's alleged response (which then became a French proverb) to the fact that the inhabitants of Saint-Malo protested its being built: "Quic' En Grogne; Je M'en Moque" (Others may grumble; I don't care). See website for Saint-Malo: http://www.saint-malo.fr/decouvrir/en/grands-moments-eng.html. Accessed 19 April 2008. The journal *Quiquengrogne* (founded in 1996) traces its title's origins back to "a war cry of Corsican sailors." www.mairie-dieppe.fr/boussole/boussole.php?pg=/quiquengrogne/quiquengrogne.html. Accessed 19 April 2008.

Typical of Rouault's propensity to layer meanings (and also his affection for Victor Hugo), *La Quiquengrogne* is also the name of a novel by Hugo. When readers asked where the title came from, Hugo replied in an 1832 letter to his publishers: "*La Quiquengrogne* is the popular name of one of the towers of Bourbon-l'Archambault. The novel is destined to complete various looks at the art of the Middle Ages—[*The Hunchback* of] *Notre-Dame de Paris* was the first part. Notre-Dame de Paris, this is the cathedral; La Quiquengrogne, this will be the tower dungeon [*donjon*]. Military architecture follows after religious architecture. In *Notre-Dame* I painted more particularly the ecclesiastical Middle Ages [*le moyen-âge sacerdotal*]; in *La Quiquengrogne* I will paint more particularly the militaristic Middle Ages [*le moyen-âge féodal*]. The whole is conceived according to my ideas, you understand, which, for good or ill, are my own." Hugo's letter is quoted in Françoise Chenet, "*La Quiquengrogne*: histoire d'un titre," paper delivered to the Groupe Hugo (Université Paris 7 / Équipe 19 siècle) on 10 February 2007. See http://groupugo.div.jussieu.fr/Groupugo/07-02-10Chenet.htm. Accessed 19 April 2008.

Hugo's designation of the title as signifying the "feudal Middle Ages" (complementing the "ecclesiastical Middle Ages") amplifies *Divertissement*'s layers of military metaphors suggested by Tara Ward in the present volume.

55 Waldemar George, "Un Grand peintre romantique français: Georges Rouault," *La Revue Mondiale* (1 September 1924): 78–82; reprinted in *Jazz Age Catholicism* 239-240.

56 Rouault, *Divertissement* 21.

57 Rouault reply to Jacques Guenne, *Nouvelles littéraries* (November 15, 1924); reprinted in *Jazz Age Catholicism* 241.

58 Rouault, "Stella Vespertina," *Sur l'art et sur la vie* 110.

In Deed and in Need: the Friendship in Art of Georges Rouault and André Suarès

Thomas Epstein

"I pour my heart out to you about my art like a child and without ulterior motive..."
—Rouault to Suarès, letter dated November 18, 1915[1]

The friendship in art between Georges Rouault and André Suarès is surely one of the most productive, and paradoxical, of the twentieth century; productive creatively for both men, although in distinctly different ways, and culminating in the masterpiece of artistic collaboration *Passion*, published by Ambroise Vollard; paradoxical because of the almost antithetical nature of these two giants. It is the purpose of this brief essay to introduce the reader to André Suarès, to outline his relationship with Georges Rouault, and to summarize the results of their creative collaboration.

Although the situation is gradually changing,[2] the name André Suarès (1868-1948) unfortunately continues to be an obscure one, even to many educated French readers. Yet his place, if not influence, at one of the centers of European artistic and intellectual life of the Modernist period, seems indisputable.[3] In part this state of affairs was of his own doing: Suarès, *le grand solitaire* ("the great loner") as he was often called, was an uncompromising, always outspoken, and sometimes unforgiving interlocutor, whose reaction to modern life combined the radical, asocial individualism of Nietzsche, a furious but solitary political *engagement*, the elitism of the most ethereal Symbolists, the tragic dualism of Pascal, and a mystico-philosophical idealism rooted in neoplatonic thinking. In a word, he was a complicated man who simultaneously sought self-affirmation, intellectual purity, solitude, *and* the company and acknowledgement of equals. Still, it would be false to attribute Suarès's gradual "disappearance" from public attention to his own efforts alone. Rather, it was also in part a demonstrable result of the vanity, self-interest, jealousy, and at times naked cowardice of his contemporaries, indeed of French society as a whole. In 1938 the young Jean Paulhan wrote to Suarès: "Dear André Suarès, I was saying to Montherlant (more or less), 'who among us would not prefer Suarès's lot to that, for example, of Valéry? To be without flatterers, without job, without *burden*.'

He answered me: 'Suarès's fate is the shame of our generation.'"[4] Almost two decades earlier André Gide put it thusly in the *Nouvelle Revue Française*:

> Our great-grandchildren will be shocked by the silence our era was able to maintain or create around Suarès: in what a burning desert did the great din of this poignant voice echo! I know that Suarès himself is complicit in this silence: his pride resists praise, and there is also the difficulty of finding an appropriate way to speak of him: it is difficult precisely because he depicts himself everywhere in his work; while not willing to take him at his word one vaguely feels that in reading into the profile he offers us we betray him.[5]

While the fascinating life and works of Suarès deserve a long monograph,[6] for our purposes a modest sketch will have to do.

André Suarès[7] was born on June 12, 1868 in Marseille, to a Jewish merchant family in decline.[8] His mother died in 1875 and his father, chronically and painfully ill from 1881, spent most of his son's adolescence debilitated and bedridden, finally dying in 1892. Suarès had two younger siblings, a brother and sister, of whom the death of the former, Jean, in 1903 in a horrible and absurd accident, permanently altered Suarès's emotional life and was the catalyst for a beautiful poem to his memory.[9] An extraordinarily gifted student of classical languages, Felix Suarès entered the École Normale Supérieure in 1886—but as a "little Marseille Jew"[10] and proud young poet no one, it seemed, wanted to associate with him; no one, that is, except for another fiercely independent figure, Romain Rolland, who took Suarès and two other marginalized Normaliens as his roommates. For Suarès—indeed for both of them—the encounter was crucial: Suarès now had someone with whom he could seriously talk about poetry, theater and music, and through whom he discovered Tolstoy and Dostoevsky.[11] The Suarès-Rolland relationship proved to be a lifelong one, although it was often stormy since they disagreed over both art *and* politics.

Unlike Rolland, Suarès did not receive his *agrégation*, already more than ambivalent about being assimilated—to the extent it was possible for a French Jew of the period—into "official" French life.[12] Instead, drawing on the French Symbolist tradition and his own character, Suarès determined to devote his life to beauty. A deeply intellectual artist preoccupied with man's dual nature, by which he meant our horrifying but inevitable mortality coupled with an innate will to transcendence, Suarès simultaneously pursued a path of human freedom and artistic creativity, which he considered linked. Though his public fame was primarily due to one book, the extremely artistic travelogue of Italy entitled *Voyage du condottière*,[13] he wrote dozens of others, almost always in small press runs and frequently in deluxe editions. Master of a startling array of forms, Suarès saw all his work as unified by his will to beauty, to poetry.[14] Thus he would surely dispute the adequacy of the current critical consensus, if what is in print is any indication, in which the verse poetry is cast aside in favor of his admittedly fascinating prose, especially a "peculiar" kind of monograph, "biographies" of the great—indeed the greatest—figures of the Western tradition, his "eternal companions" here mediated through the mind and spirit of Suarès (often in the guise of Caerdal): in these remarkable works monograph becomes dialogue, dialogue monologue, the spirit of the biographer and his subject merging. Among the authors about whom Suarès wrote at length in this manner are Cervantes, Shakespeare, Goethe, Pascal, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Baudelaire, and Napoleon.[15]

Something of a Don Quixote, Suarès madly tried to change the world. A fierce Dreyfusard at the end of the nineteenth century, he was no less militant—and public—in his patriotic, anti-German writings before, during, and after World War I; and he wrote even more desperately, angrily against Nazism, a voice in the wilderness, from 1932 onward. Needless to say, there were consequences for this outspokenness. Beholden to no orthodoxy, Suarès made everyone uncomfortable. Perhaps most notoriously in this regard, the publisher Grasset decided, at

the last minute, in 1936 *not* to publish Suarès's collection of anti-Nazi vituperations for fear of judicial reprisal.[16] Even more emotionally disturbing for Suarès was the behavior of his friend and patron Gabriel Cognacq: on June 10, 1940, with the Nazis approaching Paris, Cognacq appeared at Suarès's door to return his manuscripts and to inform him that he had destroyed their correspondence. In his seventies at the time, Suarès—as a Jew, although he in fact practiced no religion and was Christocentric in his spirituality—had to flee Paris at the arrival of the Nazis and became something of an intellectual hero to the Resistance.[17] At the end of the war, he returned to Paris to an acclaim that he received with ironic distance when not with open contempt. He died outside Paris, in La Varenne, on September 7, 1948.

Uncompromising and combative in so many ways, Suarès had conflictual relationships with almost everyone he knew. The great exception was Georges Rouault, to whom he could write in 1938 that their friendship, which "covered half our lives," was "without a single cloud."[18] What makes the statement even more surprising is that Rouault himself always stood his ground, was not one to shrink from conflict. On the surface it is indeed hard to imagine two less compatible men: Suarès the prototype of the self-consciously inspired poet, Rouault the self-described craftsman; Suarès hyper-intellectual and tending toward abstraction, Rouault close to the earth; Suarès the passionate doubter, Rouault the Catholic; Suarès the bohemian, who paradoxically lived off the generous handouts of his patrons, while the fiercely independent Rouault was a materially anxious family man; Suarès the ideologue, Rouault who sympathized, and was appalled, by everything human. Paradoxically, it would seem that the harmony of their relations rested on their antithetical natures (a strange human complementarity), united by a common commitment to a life of art that was all-encompassing, spiritual, anti-bourgeois, and reverent toward suffering.

Rouault, it is clear from the correspondence,[19] not only liked and respected Suarès but also saw—and in a sense "used"—him as an authority figure, although of a paradoxical kind: an authority whose primary characteristics were its coincidence with his own views and its extraordinarily *accepting* nature. Unlike Léon Bloy, whom Rouault had also admired and perhaps even idealized but who judged Rouault with violent negativity, Suarès's only interest was in inspiring Rouault to *be himself*—authenticity being a quality that he considered essential to Rouault's gift. Indeed Suarès wrote that Rouault was not only the truest disciple of Moreau, a complicated assertion in itself given the direction taken by Rouault's art, but also of Cezanne,[20] both of whose teachings could be summed up in a cult of artistic self-realization, inner vision. Surrounded by hostile critics, the enmity of much of the Modernist establishment, marginalized by his religiosity and working-class roots, hounded by financial problems, Rouault—who initiated their relationship in a very respectful letter of 1911—found in Suarès an extremely refined, no less marginalized figure who seemed to want nothing more from Rouault than that he turn away from the negativity of the world and toward the joy, harmony and truth of his art. In a letter of 1914, describing Suarès in the third person, Rouault wrote:

> A man who was not a painter took my hand like a brother and without preaching, without taking on the role of censor or prophet, without condemning but rather acknowledging in all my past efforts the profound sincerity of an artist taken with his art; he found it in him to take me as I was and guide me in the direction that my mind and heart naturally tended—even as I rebelled, reared up against Nature. I was like a stormy and restive horse.[21]

Suarès-Caerdal, whose own life was even more marked than Rouault's by conflict, rejection, and marginalization, surely appreciated Rouault's open admiration of him and reciprocal spirit of support. Indeed for Suarès their friendship was a privileged locus of tranquility and free exchange in a life of constant skirmishes.[22]

The early stages of their relationship bear witness to mutual affection, Rouault's growing and very human trust in Suarès (especially marked

in Rouault's long letter on the death of his father, June 22, 1912), and by Suarès's intellectual authority, expressed in opinions on Rouault's art and exhortations that Rouault not get bogged down in resentment and anger against the world (exhortations that clearly applied as much to Suarès as to his addressee: typical of Suarès, who always saw himself in others). For his part Rouault, who had a touch of the graphomaniac, frequently "submitted" his writings to Suarès for judgment. Clearly, and not surprisingly given the character of the two men, it was always Rouault who took the initiative toward greater and greater intimacy, indeed toward artistic collaboration, the first mention of which occurs in June 1913, a full quarter of a century before the publication of *Passion.* In this letter, Rouault suggests a collaborative project based on a series of engravings by Rouault that would accompany one of Suarès's recently published texts, either his Pascal or Dostoevsky monograph.[23] Little did either of them suspect that this seemingly innocent, perhaps spontaneous and certainly preliminary suggestion would lead literally to a decades-long collaboration marked by mutual struggle, frustration, and finally (at least in part) triumph.

As an extremely knowledgeable poet-critic, Suarès sought to inspire and to understand Rouault's art, both of which approaches Rouault found helpful. Against the reduction of Rouault to a latter-day Toulouse-Lautrec, Suarès stood firm, even contemptuous: "Lautrec does not go beyond what nature gives him; all he does is choose the vulgar feature and the impure line that corresponds to his temperament; perhaps it's all that he sees in life and in men. He's a quarter of Huysmans, before his conversion and without the mystical desire."[24] Suarès was one of the first clearly to see the Janus face of Rouault's art, grounded both in Medieval and Modernist forms, simultaneously drawn to the ugly and the beautiful, the mortal and the transcendent, the ideal and the caricatured. Seeing the chief "danger" for Rouault in a complete turning away from nature,[25] quite the opposite of much of the critical consensus of the time, Suarès exhorted, "Even if we are not born in harmony, we should live only for it." In so doing, in "combining" the mortal body or social mask with what glimmers through it, Rouault could "reach something not done for a very long time: the religious landscape.…As for the mystical landscape, no one has succeeded in attaining that for centuries: not since Rembrandt."[26] Suarès perhaps best summed up his reading of Rouault's art in an open letter of 1927 that served as an introduction to Rouault's *Souvenirs intimes* (Personal Reminiscences):

> …you have become the monk of painting for our time; you also seem to have become its most ascetic figure through all the horror you identify in our world, all the scorn for Beauty that perhaps pervades it. No hidden laxity mitigates the curse you hurl at all our forms of social interaction; in them you reveal the hidden stench of envy, misery, and lechery, of suffering without hope of salvation: your painting is like an exorcism.
>
> Nevertheless, for those who can see, there is also your love for the beauty of matter and the wealth you conceal within it like a fraudulent beggar who wraps his pure gold and most precious jewels in rags; in a word your secret treasure, which reveals what is most profound in your nature and your faith in an ideal endeavor.
>
> This then, my fierce Dominican of artistic form in search of autodafé, is what makes you the most religious artist of our time, and perhaps the only one we've seen in a long time. Because the others are copyists! And in matters of this kind to copy is not to be religious but merely sanctimonious.[27]

Artistic collaboration for Rouault and Suarès was both a figurative and a literal process; figurative in the sense that their correspondence and not infrequent face-to-face encounters served these two loners as a bridge leading them out of themselves and back to themselves; literal in the sense that it

produced the masterpiece *Passion*, the unfinished *Cirque* (Circus), the planned collaboration on *Miserere* and *Guerre* (see below), the unrealized *Hélène chez Archimède,* as well as several other projects. Each of these enterprises required enormous expenditures of time and effort from both men, each produced frustration, exaltation and despair: while *Miserere*, initially entitled *Miserere et Guerre* (it was in fact Suarès who counseled Rouault to separate the projects[28]), is the easy "winner" in this dubious competition in that more than thirty years elapsed between conception and completion of the book, *Passion* and *Cirque* required a nevertheless hardly modest twelve years (1927-1939) to finish. The question naturally arises: why? From Rouault's point of view the answer is clear: Ambroise Vollard.

Vollard, the renowned gallery owner and impresario of modern art, is no less famous for the books he published than the artists he represented. Gauguin, Rodin and Degas were among the artists whose lithographs he brought out, and the creation of which he often inspired, in book form; among the collaborations between artist and text for which Vollard was responsible are *Parallèlement*, which combined Bonnard's images and Verlaine's texts (published in 1900, it is generally considered a landmark in the creation of artist's books), Maurice Denis's plates for Homer's *Odyssey,* and Picasso's for Balzac's *Le chef-d'oeuvre inconnu*. However, Vollard's relationship with Rouault was special in a number of ways; for one, for well over twenty years he provided Rouault with material security and a huge studio space in which to work. Not surprisingly, given Vollard's character, this freedom was exchanged at the price of exclusive rights to Rouault's work, complex and often contentious personal relations between the two of them, and pressure from Vollard on Rouault to carry out certain projects more dear to Vollard than Rouault, most notoriously Rouault's engravings for Vollard's own *Réincarnations du Père Ubu*.[29] Nevertheless, like Rouault and Suarès, Vollard was profoundly committed to art and, no less a perfectionist than they, would spare no expense nor cut any corners to achieve what he considered excellence. In the case of book production this meant at least two things: enormous outlays of cash and endless revision of text and image, plus the time-consuming and complex process of converting Rouault's drawings, woodcuts, engravings and paintings to book plates. On top of it all was Vollard's penchant for carrying out a myriad of projects simultaneously, which slowed them all down.

While it is true that highbrow, high-priced art books became common in the first third of the twentieth century, the dynamism and nature of the Suarès-Rouault collaboration was unique. From his teacher Gustave Moreau, Rouault had learned to scorn the idea of book art as either illustration or caption: visual art did not merely "serve" the word but entered into dialogue with it, transformed the word into image, flesh. Moreover, and quite crucially, in the cases of *Passion* and *Cirque*, Rouault was not working from a finished text (as he had, for example, with Baudelaire's *Fleurs du Mal* or Vollard's *Réincarnations du Père Ubu*) but was involved in an ongoing back and forth, over many years, with Suarès, in which text inspired image, image modified text, Rouault adding, subtracting and changing images as was always his practice, Suarès writing and re-writing, each constantly consulting but never slavishly serving the other—instead collaborating in what they hoped would be a *dual* vision.

Passion and *Cirque* were in fact worked on simultaneously, with *Cirque* projected to be published first. The two works could hardly have been more different in conception: *Passion* sacred in theme, solemn, lyrical, and plaintive in tone; the latter profane and even pornographic when not merely sarcastic, angry, or bitter. The publishing history of the two works also diverged significantly; while *Passion* was ultimately printed in the form envisioned by Rouault and Suarès, *Cirque* as conceived by Rouault and Suarès was *never* published. Instead we have a first *Cirque*, comprised of eight aquatints alone, published in 1931; Rouault's *Cirque de l'Étoile filante* (The Shooting Star Circus), for which most of the work done by Rouault occurred between 1932 and early 1935,[30] published in 1938 with texts by Rouault, plus seventeen of his color etchings and eighty-six woodcuts. Finally we have

the unpublished, incomplete *Cirque* of Rouault and Suarès, dated 1939.

What happened with Rouault and Suarès's *Cirque*? Tragi-comically, it perished at the crossroads of art and commerce. Vollard, who had already sunk a small fortune in the project, took fright when he finally read Suarès's complete text and realized that it might offend the American clientele for whom it was intended. Apparently trying to buy time and to get *something* out under the title *Cirque*, Vollard printed the eight aquatints after having gotten Suarès to agree to give up the original idea of *Cirque* (Vollard promised other things to Suarès). Next Vollard persuaded Rouault to substitute one of his own texts for Suarès's, to change some of the plates, retitle the work *Cirque de l'Étoile filante*, and to publish it under Rouault's name alone.[31]

But this is not the end of the story. Rouault, ever loyal to Suarès, kept the flame of *Cirque* burning, finally getting Vollard's permission, in 1939 (the same year that *Passion* was published), to go ahead with the original *Cirque* project. This time fate intervened even more cruelly; first in the form of the outbreak of World War II, which interrupted everyone's lives, and still more catastrophically for the project, the death in a car accident of Vollard on July 22, 1939.[32] Only three copies of *Cirque*, two at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris and one in the Morgan Library in New York City, are known to exist: none are complete. This unfinished *Cirque*, dated 1939, is without table of contents, contains several unfinished plates, repetitions and there is even in *Cirque* some of Rouault's text remaining from *Cirque de l'Étoile filante*. Nevertheless we do have Suarès's entire, incendiary text, Vollard's beautiful production, and a further unexpected miracle: the Morgan copy of *Cirque*, obtained from H.P. Kraus in 1979, is bound to an exquisite cover created by the renowned bookmaker Paul Bonet. Of black morocco, with on-lays of turquoise, yellow and orange calf, gilt, doublures and guards of orange suede, the cover of the Morgan *Cirque* depicts an unforgettable sunburst pattern.

Cirque, as Vollard sensed, is both a subversive and an offensive work—subversive artistically in its almost chaotic multi-facetedness (the texts were in fact written over an approximately twenty year period, beginning in 1917), ranging from farce to essay to lyric poem and political diatribe; subversive thematically—and surely offensive to some—in its Mephistophelian demonism, its anti-bourgeois rage and general Symbolist misanthropy. A few titles will give an indication of this range, rage: the second of the work's twenty-eight sections is entitled "Surhomais," a grotesque conglomeration of Nietzsche's Surhomme/Übermensch and Flaubert's notoriously vulgar-demotic pharmacist Homais; the nineteenth section, solemnly titled "St. Paul devant l'Aréopage" (St. Paul at the Court of Areopagus) is immediately followed by "Le Sénateur Momoral Mopcey Mops de Pecksniff City. U.S.A." (unnecessary to translate!); there is the long literary-philosophical essay "Sur le clown" in which Suarès implicitly contrasts Rouault's clown as everymen to his own image of the clown as fool, mediated through Cervantes, Shakespeare and the Russian tradition in the form of artist, seer, and saint; then the chapter (titled in English) "Peacemakers, Pillmakers, Pissmakers"; and in the middle of it all a pure lyric poem about a trapeze artist entitled (again in English) "Lilyfog."

Cirque, in its flirtation with nihilism, in its presentation as a grotesque literary-artistic florilege, avoids and indeed rejects the unity of Passion. As the title suggests, *Cirque* instead imagines the world as a circus—the human circus. At its whirling, farcical center is one Mr. Tom Loyal, a Candide-like innocent who journeys across a spiritless, craven and flesh-heavy world whose extreme verge is Soviet Russia (and where Caliban, the incarnation of animalistic, faceless materialism, is Tsar). It is here, in a section called "Intermède" (Interlude), in obvious homage to Goethe (The Walpurgis Night's Dream in Faust) and entitled "Caliban and his Lice, Ballet Russe," that one of Suarès's preferred alter egos, Prospero, meets his historical fate: humiliation and a death sentence at the hands of history, in the person of Caliban. But in this Prospero's defeat, in this failure, there lurks an ironic victory; as the executioner approaches him, Prospero-Suarès takes on Ariel's wings and soars away, leaving this world altogether with the following words: "Farewell, Caliban, blind King of

the Underworld; I leave you to your prison, your empire without beauty. If ever you become capable of freedom, you will have to call me back, you dreary dog, dreary as your hope." Along with this kind of allegorical polemic with modernity Suarès takes more than a few brutal swipes at contemporary American and European cultures, an excerpt of which—from the mouth of Andco Exchange, M.P.—is offered here to suggest the kind of material that troubled Vollard:

> Andco Exchange: God and business, Mr. Loyal, business and God. All life is here, the Old and New Testaments. God is the great businessman; and business is God's creation, His will and his issue. My good man, what a bank! Business is the very proof of God's existence. Please Lord, bless the city and me. We will prove God's existence at every instant, in every office of our earthly existence. Paradise, Mr. Tom, the Garden of Eden, Idenn's Park, is the first joint-stock company with limited or unlimited liability (the original contracts have been lost) and the first bank; but the snake, the serpent, the enemy of mankind, forced Eve, and through Eve Adam, to sign a fraudulent contract—a fraud, Mr. Tom, a fraud! This is a crime, an absurdity. In London they would have verified the signature, checked the bank account, the line of credit. On this earth, sir, God is English. It's why the world is bound to belong to America. The serpent will be punished for not having respected female capital. France, Europe Asia—nothing but bad banks, bad clients, insufficient funds. We English will not accept this chaos. Nor will our American cousins. We say: No! The very Honorable President W. Weston and I say No.

Passion, published in February 1939, is of an altogether different order of verbal art than *Cirque*. Unlike the farcical spectacle of masks that is predominant in Circus, *Passion* is a solemn, desperate and at times despairing effort at unearthing the mystery of Christ's passion and man's reaction to it, of remaining true to the biblical narrative without falling into rigid orthodoxy, mere literary re-creation, or the temptation to write some kind of "new" Passion. Instead, using Rouault's images as source and inspiration,[33] Suarès seeks to tell a story that is eternally timely, always archaic and ever modern, the Mystery of a suffering at once abject and redemptive; a suffering that touches all that lives but is transformed to beauty through the voluntary, self-sacrificing, and ultimately incomprehensible ("unique") torments of the Christ.

In language and form Suarès's *Passion* is considerably closer to orthodox literary Symbolism than to the Expressionistic-farcical vocabulary and style of *Cirque*. This circumstance provides a useful parallel to Rouault's art, itself alternately fiercely sarcastic about the world as it is and inexorably drawn to the beauty that will save the world,[34]ranging between the grotesque emotionality of Expressionism and the hieratic anti-naturalism of Symbolism. In *Passion*, with its twenty-four poems in prose, dialogue and verse, its seventeen color etchings and eighty-two wood engravings, we have a mixture of biblical, contemporary and "universal" personages. The settings too alternate, indeed link an identifiable—if rather dark— present to the biblical narrative and to the imagination; link identifiable biblical-historical references to apocrypha and to the lyric voice of the poet.

The "method" of the Rouault-Suarès collaboration is immediately apparent in the book's first three sections. The first, "Robin Red Breast. Blossoming on a Drop of a Blood," whose title draws attention to the single most important color in *Passion*, depicts a robin red breast as symbolic of the blood of Christ metamorphosed into song, beauty, and flight (the poem's first lines tell it all: "Only a single drop of blood is required for all the rose bushes of the future. / It dripped from the eye onto the heart and from there, with a shudder, took wing"). The second, The Atheists' Calvary, uses the surrounding plates to describe a resurrected Christ (the "White Dress" of the second color plate), in a

setting both contemporary and biblical-historical, before a group of female worshippers (who themselves will take more "concrete" form, in Veronica and Mary Magdalene, in later poems). And the third, "Vagrant and Peasants," which is a painful dialogue between two "peasants" digging their own graves and a muscular, sarcastic "vagrant" (already with his back turned to us as he wanders away, bearing a stick over his shoulder that will later be passed to Christ, to become the cross and even later, at the end of the poem, a stick again, carried by the Executioner's Assistant), who we learn are Adam, Eve, and Cain. In these first three poems of *Passion* we see brought together—as will be the case throughout—verse, prose, and dialogue; history, myth, and imagination; believers and unbelievers; despair and hope; saints and sinners; solitary Christ and solitary-collective humanity: all to the single end of expressing Rouault-Suarès's gospel of suffering and salvation.

A significant achievement in a number of ways, *Passion* is perhaps no more so than as an extraordinary example of the power of the book to create a palpable visual and verbal rhythm via repetition, variation, accretion. The three crosses of Golgotha, made of the vagrant's stick (which is passed from hand to hand), become towering smokestacks of the black industrial landscape, then awkward but still soaring columns of hope; Pharisees become professors; the broad backs of working men awkwardly—but everything is awkward, unnatural, deformed in a world devoted to crucifying its savior—bear burdens that only Christ can accept voluntarily. As for Him, always at the center even when he stands on the periphery or is literally absent from a plate: Christ appears in the distance, then too close for comfort, alone and in human company; he loves with pity and with compassion (Veronica), with irony (Judas), in disturbed silence (Pilate); with his eyes open and his eyes closed (which disturbs us more, what he sees or what he can no longer bear to see?); his suffering is accusation, forgiveness, escape, salvation. The naked, suffering flesh of prostitutes suggests the suffering body of the crucified Christ; but no less do the less angular, more tender, bending bodies of Veronica and Mary suggest Him. We have the vulgarity of judges, of Pilate and soldiers, and the terrifying accusatory guilt of Judas. Through it all, through man's injustice and his need, through Christ's suffering and simultaneous offering of his gratuitous gift of love and self-sacrifice, Rouault and Suarès strive for their shared ideal of "form, color, harmony." Sometimes Suarès seems to follow Rouault directly, depicting what he sees (although always as a Poet, outside the strictures of mere verisimilitude). At other times Suarès's own passions, his personal and poetic preoccupations, his demons, enter into dialogue with Rouault (and surely the reverse process is also at work).

Central to their collaboration on *Passion* seems to be an attempt to get at the complex truth of the human form, especially the face, simultaneously profane and divine, that reveals in concealing. Not only is that face frequently turned away in *Passion*, as if afraid to be seen, but even when it is seen, Rouault, and Suarès with him, is unable, or rather unwilling, to depict it "naturally"; for nature—and this conception holds for both men—is not adequate to itself, is not self-sustaining, because death governs, is inherent to nature. The artistic image is therefore subject to death, to something that cannot be represented, it is framed by the void; the very idea of an artistic image either fully assimilated to nature (the neoclassical ideal), or independent of nature (modernism) is a dangerous illusion, for it ignores an essential tension in all representation: both "forget" that the world is completed outside the world, in desire and Mystery. Boldly, Rouault presents artistic images that simultaneously suggest the inherent inadequacy of all naturalism (Rouault's art is always a representation of something "real" but never capable of complete articulation, embodiment) and the inadequacy of culture (his "abstraction," with its violent simplifications, suggests an apophatic sensibility that denies the possibility of the "autonomy" of art). Like Pascal's very human being, Rouault finds himself placed between two infinities; he must simultaneously acknowledge our grandeur and our misery, our glory as a thinking reed without however pretending (as do the Artist-Magi of Modernity) to "resolve" our human fate: that is up to God.

Suarès, as mentioned earlier, was a doubter; but he was an impassioned doubter whose despair, in Kierkegaard's sense, was directed toward faith and for whom the Judeo-Christian tradition was at the center of a meaningful life. Writing to Paul Claudel on June 23, 1905 he said of their relationship: "...this conversation, the most exalted possible between two men, and perhaps the only one worth having, will never be exhausted as long as you have faith and I thirst for it, whether or not I actually have it."[35] The same attitude could be said to govern Suarès's relationship with Rouault,[36] and the collaboration on *Passion* surely served Suarès as the one project in which he was most deeply able to explore his desperate love of Christ[37] at the moment of Jesus's life that most intrigued him: his passion.[38] In this sense Suarès was radically Christian: an uncompromising enemy of mortality (he frequently wrote that he considered death to be man's one great enemy), he saw man's grandeur in the divinely inspired, suffering-induced striving for the eternal. His deep and profound knowledge of the Hebrew and Christian Bibles taught him that Man should be just and free, and that the kingdoms of love and beauty should be their realization. The tragedy of life, and of course this quixotic figure embraced a tragic vision of life,[39] was that man was born to die, he was weak and subject to evil, and thus—like Christ—had to suffer, had to die in order to live. In his stinging indictment of modern, Godless man (the one who has decided that he no longer needs God), entitled "Song of the Sepulcher" (in the section titled Via Crusis, the twentieth poem of Passion), Suarès writes: "Being without passion, because they are nothing, they boast about being pure."

The biblical narrative of the Passion, however, is not the sole source of inspiration for Suarès's text. A gifted pianist, a music lover and music critic respected by professionals,[40] Suarès idolized Bach, especially his Passions, which is certainly a source of inspiration for the poem. No less important intertextual sources are Pascal, Baudelaire, and his favorite "religious" artist, Rembrandt. Mention must also be made here of Suarès's unfinished—written right up to his death—Le Paraclet (The Paraclet), begun in 1894, running to more than a thousand pages, and only partially published to date. This mystico-rationalist text, Suarès's spiritual testament of sorts, is devoted to what comes after Jesus, to the spirit that "will guide you into all the truth,"[41] the third reign (of the holy spirit), which Suarès identifies with a kind of divine reason.

In many ways a late Romantic, Suarès was very much an artist of "negative capability," who thought of art as a path to a universality beyond mere subjectivity and who actively sought, in his artistic practice, to become the voice of the other. Throughout *Passion* the poet's lyrical persona merges with, is transformed into imagined others: the somber voice of Jesus, the sensitive, frightened words of Veronica, the terrible crowd of Soldiers and the cynical Pilate, to name a few. In so doing Suarès attempts to paint a global picture of the universal meaning of Christ's passion, of the crucifixion—to pierce the mask of flesh. Yet only in Christ itself can one imagine it dropping away altogether, as it does in the thirteenth poem, "Ecce Dolor," which begins thus (in dialogue with Rouault's engraving, which depicts Jesus full face, wide-eyed, mournful): "Here is Man without the mask, and pain is at the center of his face as it is of life." In "Apparition," the second to last poem, face to face with Rouault's Crucified One as he rises from the tomb, it is as though Suarès's own mask drops, as if before the final, awesome and terrifying Mystery, there is nothing left but his own imploring voice:

> Stern King of Heaven, with your necklace
> of blue suns and green stars; or are you
> the Empress of Sardes and Ispaphan?;
> the Emerald Queen; Celestial Androgyne,
> whether you are God's son or daughter I
> can no longer tell in our chaotic century:
> but the universe is in your eyes; time
> advances in your form; and if all forgiveness
> emanates from your presence, then absolute
> punishment is equally inseparable from
> your serenity. What terrifying fixity!
> Omnipotence, be not impassive or no one
> will be resuscitated. Hey! have you too
> forgotten the cross? Lord, you are too great
> not to be unique...You are everything that

> man is not. The stars that adorn you are your eyes, they are all the diamonds of suffering, all its emeralds. To contemplate your gaze is not merely to see a mirror of the void, the greatest of all abysses. There is neither disdain nor dread in your look; neither eternal absence nor eternal indifference in your gaze. Stern King of Heaven, you must, you must be: because all the rest is Nothingness.

It is the exploration of this "unique presence" in all its terrifying majesty, the crucified God, suffering as salvation, which is at the heart of Passion.

For Suarès, World War II was the realization of his worst fears about humanity. Abandoned both by country and many of his friends, he had to flee Paris ahead of Nazi occupation, finally finding something like refuge in Antibes. Rouault too left Paris, for Beaumont-sur-Sarthes and Golfe Juan. Only one letter from Rouault, hand-delivered by his daughter Geneviève, reached Suarès during these years. Upon his return to Paris there was no more talk of artistic collaboration with Rouault; embittered by his wartime experience, cynical about the tardy acclaim he was now receiving,[42] Suarès withdrew even more profoundly from public life, began to prepare for death.

Nevertheless, warm feelings between the two men continued. Rouault, finally—if somewhat temporarily—triumphant in the postwar years, did what he could to help Suarès with publishers. For his part, Suarès remained faithful to the memory, and meaningfulness, of their years of confidences. Both men apparently knew that they had been touched by a miracle: the transformation of passionate solitude into great art through the medium of friendship and dialogue. A letter written by Suarès to Rouault on May 31, 1939, after a serious illness suffered by Suarès, well sums up the parameters of their relationship as well as sheds some important light on the unrealized *Miserere et Guerre* collaboration. It will serve as a coda to this brief essay:

My dear Rouault,

Thank God, the attack has passed. Come see me as soon as possible. And bring the fifty-five plates with you. We'll look at them together.

We have had so much discussion about them that all that's left to do is harmonize your ideas with my visions. I will modify my texts as needed in order to bring our exchange closer together: the visions will be mine, the ideas yours.

Of course, the authentic artist and true poet are one and the same thing. You are one and I am one. They take you for a madman, me too. Nothing could be more in the order of things or more lawful. I say, what don't they take us for? We are cruel, we are barbaric, heartless, mean; people with whom others can't live. As if it weren't enough always to be under suspicion and always misunderstood.

The poet's true name has already been spoken by Baudelaire, by Rimbaud and Verlaine: the exile of the City, even the damned one [le maudit]. Luckily, they do give us leave to believe in, or hope for, the Heavenly City.

If you're free, I'll expect you Tuesday evening June 6. I've been thinking a lot about our two books, which are two monuments. In order to finish the work I'll need all the plates in front of me. I'll explain to you how I've classified them, which of them belong to Guerre and which to Miserere: I've conceived the books as two plays. I've thought it almost all the way through and written many pages. I'd like to get the work done this summer. But it will require an immense labor: these are not pages to be covered, these are walls.

Until Tuesday then, my dear Rouault.
All my heartfelt best to you.

Endnotes

1 All translations are mine (Thomas Epstein).

2 The history of the reception of the work of André Suarès is a long and labyrinthine one. After suffering almost total eclipse in the 1960s and 70s (Yves-Alain Favres's work and the efforts of François Chapon are important exceptions), interest in Suarès's work began to revive in the latter part of the 1990s. The two most significant landmarks in this revival of interest are Robert Parienté's biography *André Suarès l'insurgé* (Robert Laffont, 1990 and 1999) and the two-volume Laffont-Bouquins selection of Suarès's prose, edited by Parienté, *André Suarès* (2002).

3 Suarès was hailed by such divergent figures as Henri Bergson, Miguel de Unamuno, André Gide, André Malraux, Stephan Zweig, and Paul Claudel. See below.

4 *Correspondance Jean Paulhan et André Suarès: 1925-1940,* Cahiers Jean Paulhan 4 (Paris: Gallimard, 1987) 196.

5 Sidney D. Braun, *André Gide – André Suarès Correspondance* (Paris: Gallimard, 1963) 18.

6 Parienté's already mentioned biography is an excellent start.

7 Suarès's given first name was in fact Isaac Felix, which he changed to André for reasons of literary identity, around 1900.

8 He was in fact a quarter Breton and always felt a strong spiritual attachment to Brittany, even took the name for his most frequently used poetic alter ego, Caerdal, from the Breton language (caerdal means beauty-seeker).

9 Suarès's brother Jean (Abraham David, 1870-1903) was a French naval officer with a distinguished career that was cut short when he was run over by a train in Toulon. The brothers were extraordinarily close, even engaging in joint writing ventures. The poem mentioned above is entitled "Sur la mort de mon frère" (Paris: L.F. Hébert, 1904).

10 Parienté 69.

11 Suarès, in the 1910s, wrote extensively on Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, indeed stepping on André Gide's toes by the publication of his first Dostoevsky monograph (although he got Gide's permission) several months before Gide published his.

The passion for Tolstoy came earlier, indeed at the École Normale, directly through Rolland, who revered Tolstoy as artist and thinker. Not yet twenty Rolland wrote Tolstoy a letter expressing his admiration and asking questions of the sage of Yasnaia Polyana. Tolstoy answered him, in French, with a letter of more than three thousand words. The effect on Rolland and Suarès was, understandably, great.

12 On this subject, see, for example, Robert F. Byrnes, *Antisemitism in Modern France* (New Brunswick: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1950), Michael R. Marrus, *The Politics of Assimilation: A Study of the French Jewish Community at the Time of the Dreyfus Affair* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), Perrine Simon-Nahum, *La cité investie: la "science du judaïsme" français et la République* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1991).

13 Like many of his works, the *Voyage* was written and rewritten over a number of years. The first edition dates to 1910.

14 Some would say that his failure to produce a *novel* is what doomed him to relative obscurity. Perhaps this is what he wanted.

15 See Robert Parienté, ed., *Andre Suarès,* 2 vols., (Paris, 2002).

16 They did bring the book out in an act of belated French patriotism. See André Suarès, *Vues sur l'Europe* (Paris: B. Grasset, 1939).

17 He was particularly close with the Resistance leader André Girard and with Pierre Seghers (Suarès in fact gave a substantial sum of money to help the latter with several publishing ventures).

18 *Correspondance [de] Georges Rouault [et] André Suarès* (Paris: Gallimard, 1960) 313.

19 While a fascinating and essential source of information on their relationship, the correspondence is unequally weighted to Rouault's side of the conversation: only sixty-one of the two hundred sixty-one letters is from the hand of Suarès. The scrupulous and more sedentary Suarès seems to have saved everything Rouault wrote to him; for a number of reasons, including Nazi occupation of his studio, Rouault lost a significant number of Suarès's letters.

20 Rouault and Suarès, *Correspondance,* letter no. 34.

21 Rouault and Suarès, *Correspondance* 95.

22 This was even more true for Suarès after 1929, when his other great friend in art, the sculptor Antoine Bourdelle, died.

23 Rouault and Suarès, *Correspondance,* letter no. 32, 55.

24 Rouault and Suarès, *Correspondance,* letter no. 99, 150.

25 Rouault and Suarès, *Correspondance,* letter no. 50, 84.

26 Rouault and Suarès, *Correspondance,* letter no. 119, 174.

27 Georges Rouault, "Lettre d'Andre Suarès à Georges Rouault," *Souvenirs intimes* (Pari: E. Frapier, 1927) 7-8.

28 Rouault and Suarès, *Correspondance,* letter no. 119.

29 While Rouault grumbled about Vollard's exploitation of him, he nevertheless labored compulsively on the *Ubu* book. In a letter dated September 20,

1919 Suarès desperately tried to push Rouault in a different direction:

> All these Ubuseries aren't worth a damn. Six months of it, okay; but six years are five too many. You have gone to a lot of trouble just to nail yourself to the bottom of hell, in the circle of vile mockery, where the soul is but a thermometer of shit. And during all this time what about painting, which is salvation and paradise regained?
>
> In the end the ideas with which we live have their way with us; in the case of works of negation, on their creators. The more a work demands violence or cruelty to be destroyed, the more it must be ideal and full of beauty; because beauty is in itself a sovereign affirmation. Thus Tristan; thus Hamlet. But to hell with Ubu; it's nothing more than a remake of The Tempest to glorify Caliban, created for an audience of Calibans. This is why they worship this despicable figure, this farce. Nothing jolly here.
>
> The monsters we bear end by poisoning us—they appear on the skin in the form of abscesses and ulcers. God help us if we let them germinate in our mediastinum.
>
> It is my impression that Vollard is trying separate you from me. He wants to bleed you. If you fall to him morally, he will damn you. Make use of him, don't become his servant. He is no danger to your life, you well know how to defend it; but he could be a danger to your spirit. At bottom you have nothing in common with these enormous larvae, these fetishes and demons.
>
> Vollard is unique in Paris for his taste and understanding of painting. He is even talented in a line of work that only requires cunning. But Vollard is a reprobate. Vollard is a vampire.

30 It is of course somewhat misleading to circumscribe so narrowly the period he worked on *Cirque* since he was an artist known for consistently, even obsessively returning to the same themes, and this is perhaps especially true of the circus theme.

31 The change of title, insisted on by Rouault, was Rouault's way of acknowledging to Suarès that this wasn't *their Cirque*. Note too that even with these relatively 'simple' changes *Cirque de l'Étoile filante* did not appear until 1938.

32 For Suarès, whose life was in so many ways a failure, Vollard's death was an especially personal tragedy. He was, quite literally on July 24, to sign a contract with Vollard for the publication of five of his works, on which he was heavily counting both artistically and materially. On this matter see his letter to Rouault, no. 252.

33 In a letter to his patron Jacques Doucet dated August 7, 1927, Suarès wrote about *Passion*: "Rouault's images and my poems are not trying to be equivalent to one another; rather they are parallel to each other." See André Suarès and Jacques Doucet, *Le condottiere et le magicien: André Suarès-Jacques Doucet*, ed. François Chapon (Paris: Julliard, 1994) 450.

34 Rouault's love for Dostoevsky is well attested; indeed in his very first letter to Suarès he speaks of the impact that the reading of *Crime and Punishment* is having on him.

35 André Suarès and Paul Claudel, *Correspondance, 1904-1938 [de] André Suarès et Paul Claudel*, preface and notes by Robert Mallet (Paris: Gallimard, 1951) letter no. 13.

36 Rouault's statement that he "didn't know" whether or not Suarès believed in the divinity of Jesus seems not so much disingenuous as pointing to something he considered no less important: Suarès's love for Christ and desire for God.

37 As Suarès wrote in his final testament: "Whatever the form of my hope or of my faith, I love Jesus, I am fully faithful to Christian beauty. It is the very source of human goodness."

38 As Rouault said: "I loved Suarès for his artistic sensibility, for the universality of his culture, and for his understanding of things from which one might have expected him to be far removed. Indeed I found him more capable of grasping certain religious depths than many an official Catholic."

39 It is no surprise that Suarès and Miguel de Unamuno, author of *Del sentimiento tragico de la vida en los hombres y en los pueblos*, entertained excellent relations during the latter's Paris exile.

40 See Michel Drouin, "Immensité de Bach," *André Suarès, le condottiere: mélanges édités à l'occasion de l'exposition présentée au Centre de la Vieille Charité*

à Marseille (été 1998), eds. Claudine Irles and Robert Parienté (Arles: Actes Sud, 1998) 143-164.

41 *The New English Bible,* "The Gospel According to John," 16:13 (Cambridge, 1976).

42 Suarès was awarded the Grand Prix Littéraire de Paris in 1947.

André Suarès, *Passion* (excerpts)

Translated by Thomas Epstein

Ecce Dolor

(Georges Rouault's illustration for this poem is no. ##.)

Here is Man without the mask, and pain is at the center of his face as it is of life. How horrifying to see everything all at once: those, at war, who have taken refuge in a hole, anticipating a shell, know it.

Terrible visage of total affliction: except perhaps for Veronica's cloth no mirror can equal this eternal scream.

A great injured beauty is surely more beautiful and more human than any other: it can be known better and loved more.

Look at this forehead and at its dew of blood, bent to the earth by the mocking crown.

His hair is braided with purple ribbons of flesh. Red ravines wrinkle the cheeks. Furrows for blood, channels for tears.

His eyes are almost closed beneath the night's black lid: the pupil has borne all. A white strip appears in the field of darkness, the first sign of dawn, it is Lazarus's shroud awakening. You will not forget his bloody lips.

All these acts of cruelty, each lash, every torment of the flesh wounds the transverberated soul and causes the spirit to shudder: sadness is the eyelid of night.

Only the weak and the obtuse flee this pain, for it is the struggle against evil and the battle with the abyss. Although you must hate pain, must you also misunderstand it? To defeat it you must measure yourself by it.

The only life is in your beating heart; the only death is of yourselves and of your mortality.

You who flee pain, don't you know that it follows you? It is in your every step, in your shadow, it is everywhere you can be. Besides, do you think you can outlive the death of the gods?

I always knew about the sting of offense
but I never felt it, never paid it any mind.
Now I measure the arrogance of blows and
the dogs' baying; I measure the anguish
of lacerated flesh; the horror of majesty
despised yet still enthroned. Long nails
and leather whips have sculpted this face:
they've made a flame out of it. Look, the
torch is turned upside down: the fire burns
from the bottom, the torch is turned against
earth.

Yes, you may mock the One who chose to
be there, who could have lived in happiness
but died in such pain and in so much
ignominy, which your laughter crowns. He
is eternal and is always among all of you
but he is also with each of you alone.

The gods, not all of whom were born in
love, lived thanks to those who loved
them. All of them died when the loving
stopped. Wherever they are generous with
their lives, men receive eternal life in
exchange. O, marvelous commerce between
a loving power and an always-affirmative
intelligence. Negation is but a tool of
science.

He is a quantity that eludes all calculation.
Worlds can be measured with scale and
compass, with square and ruler; but they
cannot know why there are worlds nor know
man himself, who weighs and measures.

Ineffable lucidity of these nearly closed
eyes: after having loved so much they
are now closed shut to this pathetic little
universe, are wide open only to the vast
depths. These eyes have passed through the
kingdom of knowledge.

On this face so deep and so youthful in
its eternity, more manly than mind, more
tender than forgiveness, the blood is still of
woman and the silent tears are of the child.

A terrifying face, in truth a face too fertile.
Here our world is veiled, and it fades:
another world is being born.
Since all is nothing, there is no longer time
for waiting
On the illusory presence of this ever fatal
today:
Let god be revealed in you rather than in
him:
Don't expect to find the sun except in
searching through the ash.

O flame, I drew you up from the well of
lassitude
When this too tender heart dripped blood
drop by drop:
The moment has finally come to hear
yourself better:
Listen for the pure chant, the farewell into
which you fled.

O my soul, great, taciturn and
unfathomable:
While the shadow of death overflows the
urn
Of the silent flood that never runs dry

You soar to the sphere where delight awaits
you
The enchantment of the song fed by love
alone
And which, with eyes closed, smiles on its
own agony.

Veronica

(Georges Rouault's illustration for this poem is no. ##.)

THE VOICE: It is I. I am watching you. Shut yourself off from the noise of life and you will hear my voice. You advance and you halt: you give all yourself and you seem not to recognize me. Yet it is I, it is I.

SHE: Speak to me, O please keep speaking Dearly Beloved, you to whom I've never dared to speak a single word; You, on whom I never gazed except inside myself; each time I caught sight of you my eyes were lowered; your very presence burned the futile straw of my soul. But never did you speak to me. Are you really there, You, the one face?

THE VOICE: What are you still searching for, now that you've found me? I was where you placed me, and I am where you are. You doubt yourself and yet it was you who called me.

SHE: You are the unique presence and I am wavering. Is it because of too much joy or the shame and torment of my unworthiness? Love, you are both delight and suffering. All else is nothing. Your face is sculpted by the sweat on your brow. The blood of your mouth and your eyes pinned your lips to our lips, your gaze to ours, imploring love in the undeceived expectation of a kiss. It is you, the unique presence: all the rest is nothing, o my king, my pain and my paradise, my desert and my life. Who knows whether or not I'm dreaming, and who are you?

THE VOICE: Your eyes are full of me and yet you do not recognize me. O woman. Woman: a word that says everything, and nothing.

SHE: O dear and sweat torment, what have I done, weak creature that I am? Must it be that even my useless pity is a betrayal? Am I so insignificant, so human that all my tenderness is a delight only for my own tears? Do I do you evil, Lord, even in wiping your lips and your brow? Am I thus an obstacle, Lord, do I hinder you even in staunching the blood-

heavy sweat on your brow? I see it clearly, Dear One, my Beloved: for a divine instant I am the veil between the world and you.

THE VOICE: Understand yourself better.

Love me. Don't bother trying to understand the evil that you do me and that your love itself can do.

Give all that you have. Nothing more is asked of you, poor creature. From whom can more be expected? Throw everything in the desired abyss. If you then think yourself miserable, be generous with your misery. You'll be ridding yourself of it as you give.

SHE: I have an irrevocable faith in the longed-for abyss toward which I am running.

Lord, you are the shepherd. I am the bitch herding the flock. I am hurrying after your shadow.

I am licking your hands and the wounds of your torn flesh. O, eternal nourishment of my fast.

I will not reach the site where it all culminates.

I am not worthy of being present for your last breath. Alas, am I incapable of lavishing my all for you?

THE VOICE: You lavish yourself as does the poor man, the perfectly destitute one who lays his naked body on a man fainted away in the snow, under the stars of a winter sky.

Veil of love, perfect mirror whose tears' incorruptible silvering preserves the divine image forever. Suffering of this kind imprisons the face with an eternal dew that happiness inevitably effaces: pure pain alone can retain it. O passion for eternity, master passion. Do not go far: I remain wherever you are.

Over there, on the crosses, a great red sun falls: the parricide oblivion of black is veiled: bitter remorse hangs in the woods.

Please let the night stretch its great winding sheet over the earth's nakedness, covering it, Please let the sky of eternity collapse on the world.

André Suarès, "Ecce Dolor" and "Veronique," in Suarès and Georges Rouault, Passion, Eaux-fortes originales en couleurs et bois dessinés (Paris: Ambroise Vollard, 1939); reprinted as André Suarès, Passion: Eaux-fortes originales en couleurs et bois dessinès par Georges Rouault, with an avant-propos by François Chapon (Paris: Cerf, 2004) 69-72, 29-31.

The McMullen Museum gratefully acknowledges the kind permission to publish this translation granted by the Roumanet family and François Chapon, the heirs and executor of the André Suarès estate.

PART V: 1940–1958

1939–1958: Perpetual *Peregrinus*: *Toute vue des choses qui n'est pas étrange est fausse*[1]

Stephen Schloesser

> Whoever he may be, the beggar along the road, the miserable blind man, and the man crushed, is the one who, despite appearances, holds the upper hand, orders the course of conversation, commands the situation.[2]

1939–1944: Rouault's Third War

Three days after the outbreak of the war on September 1, 1939, Rouault wrote a letter to Suarès from his summer home at Beaumont-sur-Sarthe, in Normandy just southwest of Paris. The "situation has, however, become *tragic*," he wrote, "not only the fact of the [geopolitical] events, but of the death of A. Vollard and its aftermath."[3] His atelier at Vollard's home on rue Martignac had been legally sealed up "in order to preserve the goods of the inheritors," and Vollard's brother, Lucien, had informed Rouault that the court would name an "*expert who will make a selection*" of which works would go to the heirs and which (if any) the artist might keep for himself. Rouault had immediately written to Lucien Baudelot, lawyer at the Court of Appeal in Paris, saying that he would reserve the right to a future appeal. "Who will be this expert?" Rouault rhetorically asked Suarès. "Everything is there—not only my work of thirty years but all the works, the entire *Miserere et Guerre*, everything already published: *Passion* and *Cirque Étoile filante* are there." It had been a month since he had "really slept, *feeling everything that is happening, feeling it with a terrified reality*, standing before deaf and blind clerks...." It was "the most horrible test of my life and of my anticipated death; ... to rest in the *unknown* (*l'inconnu*) of the future.... The lawsuit, the delaying tactics—gold and money—I don't care (*je m'en f...*) I am *dismembered* (*écartelé*) and I would like to find a quick remedy."[4]

On January 20, 1940, Rouault wrote Suarès another letter in much the same vein, still immersed in the lawsuit, which had turned vicious. "*Homo homini lupus*, more than ever...." Taking stock of his life under Vollard, Rouault added that he looked with "*horror*" not only on Paris and his country, but on the thirty years of intense overwork that he had lived there. (He qualified this claim by saying that he was speaking of his "active and exterior life"; "the other, more secret" life, he added, had "saved" him and "helped to maintain a certain order and equilibrium" [*aidé à garder certain ordre et équilibre*]).[5] In May-June 1940,

the Germans quickly overcame the French, and the Rouault family fled to Golfe-Juan in the extreme southeast, settling in what would become the Vichy regime (the country's northern half becoming the occupied zone).

In spite of such upheaval, as Rouault turned seventy years old in 1941, his career continued to achieve unprecedented levels of success, especially in the United States (which was not yet at war). In 1940, he had exhibitions in Los Angeles, Boston, Washington, and San Francisco. From December 1940 through January 1941, *Le clown blessé* (1939, **no. 62**) was on display in New York at the "Landmarks in Modern Art" exhibition, one of a number of paintings that had arrived in the summer of 1940.[6] "How they left Europe and ever got here is more than I can say," wrote Pierre Matisse to Duncan Phillips. "They probably were the last pictures to come before the English blockade set in." Matisse's correspondence to important clients at that time describes *Le Clown blessé* in superlative terms—"probably the greatest work created in our time"—an indicator of Rouault's towering reputation. The painting was leaving New York in mid-February 1941, to be included in the exhibition of "Art of the Third Republic" where, Matisse wrote, it would "hold the most important position in the exhibition."

In spite of the trauma that Vollard's death triggered, there was also another effect: Rouault was freed from the monopoly that Vollard had exerted over his career since 1913. The new freedom allowed Rouault to collaborate with Tériade, the Greek ex-law student who had launched *Verve* in 1937.[7] *Verve*, an eclectic experiment, tried to reconcile oppositions: moderns vs. ancients (Braque, Picasso and Miro were juxtaposed with medieval manuscript illuminations); "high" vs. "low" culture (European paintings placed next to old Japanese photographs); visual vs. literary arts (essays published by André Gide, Albert Camus, André Malraux, and Pierre Reverdy). Rouault had already contributed works to *Verve* just before the war: an original lithograph for the cover of issue 4 in November 1938; and an interior lithograph and article for the issue 5-6 in spring 1939.[8]

After Rouault contacted him about the possibility of publishing several illustrated books, Tériade outlined his conception for *Divertissement* in a letter dated April 30, 1941:

> The basic idea of publishing would be to make a *manuscript* (*est d'en faire un* manuscrit). Painted and written by you. And in order that the reproduction be perfect, we must forget in so far as possible the idea of reproduction. You know my old-school ideas (*vielles idées*) about that…the painter must not be hindered, influenced by the possibilities of reproduction, nor bend to doing the engraving himself, nor modify his colors.[9]

As Tériade emphasized, the intention was to produce a *manuscript*—an idea in line with the larger project of *Verve*, which had been a desire to revive the unity of medieval illuminated manuscripts (i.e., unity of text and image) in the modern world. The aim fit in perfectly with Rouault's own self-identification as being primarily an artisan as well as his proclivity for poetry.

Divertissement (**nos. 65a–o**) was printed in 1942 and published in 1943. Not only did Rouault fulfill Tériade's intention of unity by both writing the text and producing the images himself (as he had done for *Cirque de l'Étoile filante*), but the idea of "making a manuscript" is conveyed visually by the poetic text, printed in handwritten form. As Anne Davenport and Tara Ward show in this volume, in *Divertissement*, Rouault assumes the voice and perspective of the medieval poet François Villon (ca. 1431–1463). (Rouault enjoyed the symbolic coincidence of having been baptized in the same church as Villon, writing in *Verve*: "Baptized at Saint Leu of Paris, the parish, they say, of Villon and of his mother, poor little thing, mixed up in his shadows."[10]) In *Divertissement*, assuming Villon's voice enables Rouault not only to help himself come to terms with the emotionally difficult circumstances of various forms of exile (from both home and unfinished works). It also allows him to issue a call to arms, to mobilize his compatriots, both living and deceased, to defend French civilization against

modern fascism—risky business, since Rouault was living in Vichy France, a fascist state. Using Villon as a symbol for the prewar avant-garde's neo-medievalism, Rouault recasts the history of modern art as a nationalist lineage, particularly French, a tradition of opposition to academic classicism and political conservatism.[11]

The concept of *divertissement*—diversion or distraction—is close to the heart of Pascal's worldview, dialectically linked with *misère* ("misery" or "wretchedness"). For Pascal, war is a distraction, perhaps the greatest of human diversionary tactics—and in giving this title to work produced during his third war, Rouault underscored this core concept. Pascal wrote in his *Pensées*:

> Diversion [*Divertissement*]. Sometimes, when I set to thinking about the various activities of men, the dangers and troubles which they face at Court, or in war, giving rise to so many quarrels and passions, daring and often wicked enterprises and so on, I have often said that the sole cause of man's unhappiness is that he does not know how to stay quietly in his room…he is bound to start thinking of all the threats facing him, of possible revolts, finally of inescapable death and disease, with the result that if he is deprived of so-called diversion he is unhappy…
>
> The only good thing for men therefore is to be diverted from thinking of what they are, either by some occupation which takes their mind off it, or by some novel and agreeable passion which keeps them busy, like gambling, hunting, some absorbing show, in short by what is called diversion.[12]

Courtrooms, battlefields, and absorbing circus shows: diversion or distraction is one half of the dialectic. The other is wretchedness—i.e., *misère*:

> Wretchedness [*Misère*]. The only thing which consoles us for our miseries is diversion. And yet it is the greatest of our miseries. For it is that above all which prevents us thinking about ourselves and leads us imperceptibly to destruction. But for that we should be bored, and boredom would drive us to seek some more solid means of escape, but diversion passes our time and brings us imperceptibly to our death.[13]

Considering Pascal's reflections within the context of Rouault's self-acknowledged state of mind, both in exile and in a lawsuit, the title *Divertissement* seems to be a self-conscious realization on the artist's part, fully aware that he wanted to escape "thinking of all the threats facing him…[and] finally of inescapable death." In response to war, Rouault offers another *divertissement*, a "novel and agreeable passion," an "absorbing show." Pascal's reflections add yet another layer of wartime meaning to *Miserere et Guerre*, Rouault's word-play on Callot's *misères de la guerre*. We go to war to escape misery; but this distraction unwittingly leads to the greatest misery. While boredom would lead to something more solid, distraction leads imperceptibly to death, one unconscious step at a time. *Guerre* only exacerbates *la misère*.

In Rouault's hands, far from an unconscious diversion, *Divertissement* is ironically the work of a an artist at his most self-reflective, one who knows himself well enough to smile at himself. The playful titles of his circus figures suggest a whole cast of characters who know themselves well enough not to take themselves too seriously: *Mangetout* (Eats Everything), *Le Moqueur* (The Mocker), *Quiquengrogne* (What the Hell), *Les Deux Têtus* (Two Stubborn Men or Head to Head), *Les Deux Anciens* (Two Elders).[14] Perhaps the most important of all is a character who is represented in verse but not visually:

> Here is Boum-boum, maintaining himself
> without a balancing-rod
> on the tightrope.[15]

Fig. 1a. Georges Rouault, *Filles (étude)* (Whores, study, 1910), Oil, 93 x 65 cm., Collection of Monsieur Max Bangerter, Montreux. Reprinted in Rouault, *Soliloques* (1944) 61. Photo: Stephen Vedder

Fig. 1b. Georges Rouault, *Les deux filles* (Two Whores, 1906)), Watercolor, 69.5 x 54 cm. Private collection, Bâle. Reprinted in Rouault, *Soliloques* (1944) 165. Photo: Stephen Vedder

Fig. 1c. Georges Rouault, *Hiver* (Winter, 1910-1914), Gouache, 31 x 20 cm., Collection of Madame H. Hahnloser, Winterthur. Reprinted in Rouault, *Soliloques* (1944) 193. Photo: Stephen Vedder

1944-1948: Postwar Reconstruction

In 1944, after the D-Day invasion and liberation of Normandy, the seventy-three-year-old Rouault was able to return from southern France to his summerhouse in Beaumont-sur-Sarthe. It had been occupied by German occupation troops who damaged several works left behind, including Rouault's 1895 self-portrait and the *Danseuse* (**no. 66**) exhibited in *Mystic Masque*.[16] (The Germans had already demonstrated contempt for his works in May, 1939, when they were *"excommunicated* from the Berlin Museum with all the other French works... What an honor!"[17]) Chronologically speaking, the *Danseuse* would be placed alongside works of the early 1930s; it was originally produced as a preparatory illustration for a tapestry executed in 1932. In the exhibition sequence of *Mystic Masque*, however, it has been placed at the end of the war. Partly, this is meant to draw the viewer's attention to the exceptional value it acquired in Rouault's postwar memory—even after it was restored, it would symbolize those somber days of exile, of having to leave treasures behind, and the warring destruction that had invaded (literally) the very heart of the home. Partly, too, the exuberant charm of the dancer, especially in her monumental stature (85 x 46 inches), marks the war's end.

1944 also saw an important publication for Rouault—*Soliloques*—edited by Claude Roulet, who had just published a work on the symbolist poet Stéphane Mallarmé the year before.[18] When Rouault had said that he was thinking of burning his writings, Roulet replied: "If you entrust them to me, I will make a choice among them and put the best into an ordered volume."[19] In the end, Roulet recounted, Rouault had given him two groups of papers: the first was a large packet comprising 1200 pages; although none of them were formally dated, Roulet estimated that the majority came from the era of the Great War. The second group, comprising about 250 pages, could be definitively dated 1940-1941. Roulet assembled the collection and Rouault reviewed it. "I could have made a much longer book out of all the material at my disposal," writes Roulet in his foreword, "but I didn't since I decided to exclude the more strident texts that didn't warrant publication, those of a political or satirical nature that were all-too determined by the times."

Also included were eight original illustrations reproduced in colors, all of them belonging to Swiss collections. Printed in Zurich, Switzerland, a neutral wartime state, the book provides an important starting point for anyone interested in Rouault's verses and use of language, an overview assisted by Roulet's short but useful analysis of repeated themes. Among the illustrations especially suited to *Mystic Masque* are works that come from Rouault's earliest period, including a clown, two plates of prostitutes, and an early drawing inserted into an essay entitled "L'Exode" **(figs. 1a, 1b, 1c)**. In light of what has already been said about *"Super flumina Babylonis"* **(no. 24)**, *Le Vieil homme chemine*, *Chemineau*, and *Aide-bourreau (portant un des bois de la croix* **(nos. 47p, 47o, 47q)**, the opening lines of "L'Exode" (Exodus) are especially complex in meaning:

> Fugitives, at the turning of road, descend
> from the crest. They had been told: "Go
> further ... always further."
> They fled with their baggage, sleep now
> here and now there.
> Like Cain having killed Abel, they flee, and
> they plead not guilty.[20]

Images, as we have seen, layer themselves in Rouault's "semantic river": Babylonian exile, Exodus from Egyptian slavery, Cain, doomed to wander forever, fugitives, and in general, wayfarers on the road. Yet another layering occurs on the page opposite the depiction of two prostitutes where Roulet has inserted these lines from Rouault: "Hair rolled up into a helmet / The taut hock / Is Salomé / Ready to dance.[21] Prostitutes, Salomé, meat markets, and butcher shops each add their semantic element. *Soliloques* is filled with such examples, demonstrating how vitally important an acquaintance with Rouault's poetic verse is for unlocking the multivalent meanings of his images.

After the Liberation of Paris on August 25, 1944, Rouault returned to the capital. It was a time for new beginnings, including the launch of a new

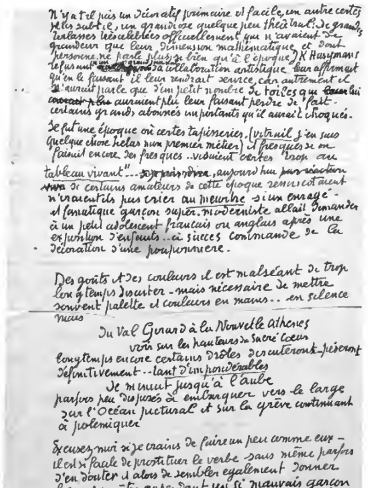


Fig. 2a. Georges Rouault, Autograph manuscript signed, [n.p, n.d.]; Boston Public Library, Ms. E.9.4 (65.42). Photo: Stephen Vedder

Fig. 2b. "Existe-t-il un Art expressionniste?," *Art Présent*, 1/1 [Paris, 1945]. The art journal reproduced Rouault's manuscript in facsimile.

journal, *Art Présent*. Rouault submitted a handwritten manuscript for the first issue (**figs. 2a, 2b**), which appeared in 1945. The article, "Does a French Expressionism Exist?," featured Rouault's manuscript reproduced in facsimile, giving the impression—as *Divertissement* had two years earlier—of an "illuminated" manuscript. Even at age seventy-four, Rouault was on the front lines as culture tried to pick up the pieces and shape a postwar era.

1945 also saw Rouault's first retrospective exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. One hundred and sixty-one paintings, engraved works, and tapestries were shown. James Thrall Soby's essay for the catalogue situated Rouault's popular appeal within the context of world war:

> Certainly the penitent psychology of recent wartime has increased the regard in which [Rouault] is held, and in terms of popular acclaim a writer was justified in saying "his pictures seem to have been reserved for a generation that is capable of a tragic vision."...Viewed less emotionally...He emerges as one of the few major figures in 20th century painting.[22]

In the midst of personal and historical upheaval, Rouault seems to have maintained an inner tranquility that allowed him to return repeatedly to a-temporal, hieratic, meditative figures. Rouault had painted many faces of Christ on Veronica's veil; now he painted Veronica herself (*Véronique*, ca. 1945, **no. 67**).[23] Veronica's hieratic pose with eyes wide open appears deliberately meant to imitate a late-antique or even Byzantine portrait—perhaps an effect of having collaborated with the Greek Tériade. (For a prewar contrast, compare *Véronique* to *L'Italienne*, **no. 55**.) Veronica's symbolic meaning in 1945 seems even greater after Rouault's four years in exile from both his home and confiscated unfinished works. Veronica's compassionate face is there, offering him solace on the road. One wonders whether this masterpiece was not produced, at least in part, as an act of thanksgiving for having been brought home safely.

On March 19, 1947, Rouault won his lawsuit against Vollard's inheritors, to which critics responded by calling the artist "damned" and "a new Machiavelli."[24] Seven hundred unfinished returned to the artist were temporarily deposited with the Musée Nationale d'Art Moderne. (One hundred and nineteen works had already been sold on the art market.)[25] On November 5, 1948, in a defiant demonstration of principle, Rouault burned three hundred and fifteen canvases he judged he would not be able to finish in his lifetime (**fig. 3**). *Time* magazine reported the event for an American audience:

Fig. 3. Georges Rouault destroying his works on November 5, 1948. Photo courtesy Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris

> Georges Rouault, the 77-year-old French modern whose paintings glow like hot coals, burned up 315 of them last week. He had gotten them back, along with 400 others, from the heirs of Dealer Ambroise Vollard, on a legal technicality (TIME, July 22, 1946). His argument: the dealer was entitled only to his finished pictures, and since he had never signed the pictures, they were unfinished and therefore his own property.... The 315 pictures he burned, mostly youthful efforts, failed to come up to the old man's standards...
>
> The execution took place in the furnace room of a hat factory. Wearing a grey business suit and black bowler hat, Rouault

> stood by the open furnace door, tossed each painting singly into the flames. Now and then he would pause to pronounce one of them "not so bad," but in an hour and a half every picture (some worth up to $2,000 [i.e., $18,000 in 2008 buying power]) was reduced to ashes. Driving back to Paris in his lawyer's black limousine, Rouault looked overcome with gloom. "Bad or not," he said, "they were my children."[26]

The *Profil de clown* (1948, **no. 68**) was finished within the context of this legal and psychological postwar drama. Like the prewar *Le dernier romantique* (1937, **no. 50**) and the wartime *Le Moqueur* (1943, **no 65d**), the suspicious eye glancing back over the shoulder indicates that this clown knows exactly what the critics are saying. However, unlike those spry figures, the 1948 clown's mask paint cannot completely erase the facial creases that difficult years have embedded. The narrow gaunt hollow cheeks suggest someone barely subsisting, perhaps a self-reflection. At the end of May, 1945, Rouault wrote to Suarès that he had lost twenty-five kilograms (fifty-five pounds)—this bodily detail sandwiched in-between news that Isabelle was dealing with the Vollard lawsuit, and that his son-in-law, Yves le Dantec, had just returned from a prisoner-of-war camp in Lübeck.[27] (The 77-year-old Suarès had himself just survived the Holocaust, having successfully out-maneuvered the Gestapo for four years.) The profiled clown's decidedly down-turned corners of the mouth are far removed from the cheerful role he is supposed to play as an entertainer in life's masque.

The coloration of the clown, too, is unusual for this late period, most other contemporaneous works being marked by brilliance. The *Profil de clown* marks this milestone year of 1948 in which Rouault burned works he knew he would not live to finish; in which he was only able to publish the *Miserere* by leaving behind a significant number of plates rejected for the same reason—life's approaching end (**fig. 4**); and in which he bid a final farewell to André Suarès, dead at the age of eighty. The *Profil de clown*, then, is a powerful and candid snapshot, an unmasked encounter with the limits of mortality.

1948: Mystic Realism: *Miserere* as Realized Eschatology

With the assistance of Abbé Maurice Morel, Rouault selected and organized the legends for the version of the *Miserere* as it was published. A comparison of these final titles with the list made by Isabelle Rouault in 1947 shows changes made during this final redaction a year later.[28] Generally speaking, the choices seem to have been in the direction of universalizing themes. The published *Miserere* was displayed in Paris at the Galerie des garets in Paris from November 27 to December 21, 1948; in New York at the Kleemann Galleries from February 14 to March 5, 1949; and in Munich at the Galerie Günther Franke from July 16 to August 20, 1949.[29] The Munich show serves to recall the immediate postwar context in which *Miserere* appeared: it began shortly after the end of the Berlin Airlift successfully outlasted the Soviet blockade of the city's Allied sectors, June 27, 1948 to May 12, 1949. On May 23, the French, British and American

Fig. 4. Georges Rouault standing in front of *Miserere*. Photograph by Crespi. Photo courtesy Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris

sectors were merged to create the Federal Republic of Germany (the BRD, in which Munich was located); on October 7, the Soviet Zone established the German Democratic Republic (DDR). The *Miserere*, then, was received during Rouault's fourth war—the Cold War—a context Americans quickly constructed as an opposition between a "religious" (read as Christian) USA versus an "atheistic" USSR. This new situation would have important ramifications for Rouault's 1950s reception, especially in America.

Rouault had wanted his monumental work to be available to a broad readership in the way that the early-modern invention of printing had made illustrated graphic works (like the emblem books discussed above[30]) widely available. In 1949, work immediately began to prepare a commercial version of the *Miserere* for publication by the Trianon Press (Paris) in 1950; in 1951, similar editions were published in Munich and, once again, Paris (this time with Éditions du Seuil); in 1952 the Trianon Press volume was reprinted by the Museum of Modern Art (New York).[31] As Virginia Reinburg notes in this volume, by the late 1960s, the *Miserere* had been published in Dutch, Spanish, Italian, Scots Gaelic, and Japanese. Rouault lived to see his dream—of a mass-produced illustrated book, like those of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries—become a reality.

Having discussed above the *Miserere*'s achievement of production in 1927, only one aspect of its publication and reception in 1948 will be considered here: namely, the question of why it ends with Veronica's Sudarium. As noted in an earlier essay ("Notes on the *Miserere* plates"), the Sudarium is the leitmotif that weaves together the *Miserere*. It concludes the *Miserere* section (*Et Véronique au tendre lin*, **no. 27gg**) and provides the linking hinge to the following *Guerre* section (**no. 27hh**). It hangs above the deceased in the middle two plates of this section—*Le juste* and *De profundis* (**nos. 27ss** and **27tt**)—and it concludes the section as well as the entire series, making these Rouault's last words: "It is by his wounds that we are healed" (**no. 27fff**). The choice to end such a monumental meditation in the middle of the 20th century—named the most horrible century of Western history by Sir Isaiah Berlin—with a somewhat obscure and seemingly outdated devotional image merits reflection.

A more likely ending for Rouault's narrative would have been one of the plates that was, at the end, left unfinished and cancelled for lack of time: *En tout coeur bien né, Jésus encore ressuscite* (In every heart born well, Jesus rises again) (see fig. 5 in Schloesser, "Notes on the Miserere").[32] Its image is familiar in Christian iconography: Christ with arms stretched out overhead rises up out of the tomb, leaving behind three sleeping soldiers. On a narrative level, this would have been the most likely image with which to end to end the *Miserere* series—namely, the chronological and teleological climax of the biblical story. Its position as the last among the other forty rejected *Miserere* plates in the catalogue raisonné suggests that this is originally the place it was intended to occupy, namely, the final plate of the projected one hundred.

Another possibility for ending the series is suggested by Abbé Morel's documentary film about the *Miserere*, produced for the tribute paid to Rouault in 1951 on the occasion of his eightieth birthday.[33] Morel chose to end the film, not with the individual resurrection of Christ at Easter, but instead with the more general resurrection of the dead at the apocalypse. In order to represent this scene, Morel employed the somewhat gruesome and jarring images of skeletons from the *Miserere*—images largely inspired by Rouault's illustrations of Baudelaire's *Fleurs du mal* and used as macabre figures in war scenes. Most particularly, Morel used the skeletons in *"Debout les morts!"*, a chilling reference to the shout given to soldiers (popularized by Léon Bloy) as they rushed up out of trenches into the line of enemy fire.

Significantly, Rouault chose neither of these more logical and conventional endings, neither the resurrection of Christ nor the general resurrection at the apocalypse. Instead, Veronica's Sudarium ends both sections, and in this choice we see Rouault's definitive statement about human existence. His is a realist's world—a world of suffering and misery, poverty and wandering, unjust judgments and maltreatment. If there is any mercy in this world—*miserere*—it cannot be a disembodied mercy, a mercy in the form of a *deus ex machina*.

Rather, it must be a realist's redemption, a "realized eschatology" that comes in concrete ways along the wayfarer's road.[34] Veronica "still walks along the road" of human life—the pilgrim's road, the road to Calvary (*le Chemin du Calvaire,* **no. 1**). As Rouault has organized his monument, healing and harmony only arrive, not by escape from the human condition, but rather from below, not in spite of but *through* the wounds. On this, Rouault seems in agreement with another poetic voice, this one quintessentially New England, north of Boston:

> He says the best way out is always through.
> And I agree to that, or in so far
> As that I can see no way out but through—
> Leastways for me—[35]

It is also profoundly French, powerfully expressed by Gustave Thibon in France's darkest wartime days, quoted in turn by Gabriel Marcel, the Catholic existentialist philosopher:

> You feel you are hedged in; you dream of escape; but beware of mirages. Do not run or fly away in order to get free: rather dig in the narrow place which has been given you; you will find God there and everything. God does not float on your horizon, he sleeps in your substance. Vanity runs, love digs. If you fly away from yourself, your prison will run with you and will close in because of the wind of your flight; if you go deep down into yourself it will disappear in paradise.[36]

In addition to its "realized eschatology," the "sacred ignorance" embodied in Rouault's content (the Sudarium) and form (the two-part structure maintained in *Miserere* and *Guerre*) is also worth considering in the context of its 1948 publication.[37] In 1949, Theodor W. Adorno would famously proclaim: "After Auschwitz, it is no longer possible to write poems."[38] The Holocaust had posed the problem of representation in a new way, and this problem of the "moral caesura"—whether art after the Holocaust could ever be the same as that before; or, more radically, whether art was even a possibility—has received differing treatments from scholars like Adorno, Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, Emmanuel Levinas, and Jean-François Lyotard.[39] Although they sharply differ in their responses, they share the same initial sense of rupture: "But here, this experience will turn out to have been crucial, and massive, invading everywhere, devouring everything…It's the experience of radical Evil."[40] For a follower of one of the three Abrahamic traditions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam), this problem of representation is closely related to the ancient prohibition against the making of images—a commandment designed to maintain an absolute distinction between the Creator and creation.

In addition, by postulating that the Creator assumed the nature of creation in historical time and space, Christianity creates a representational conundrum:

> The Christian doctrine of the Incarnation holds that Christ is at once fully God and fully man. His divine nature is not circumscribable, but his human nature is. That embattled article of faith exemplifies the problem of representation. How can one represent the humanity of Christ without imparing the integrity and permanence of his divine nature, as the doctrine of the Incarnation demands?…the only way to grasp his human nature is to represent him as man. The form of man, however, is vitiated by a whole variety of accidents—even though he is an image of God. Yet how else can one know Christ?[41]

We have already seen one method Rouault cultivated for an incarnational art that tried to acknowledge the ubiquity of evil in the world (which is, after all, the point of *Les Fleurs du mal*): an increasing turn toward Byzantine and Romanesque representational styles. Flat, hieratic, anti-realist means of representing realistic subjects—distinguishing between image and prototype—tried to preserve the paradoxical tension inherent in incarnational theology and ontology.[42]

Another way Rouault attempted to preserve this paradox, whether consciously or unwittingly,

was by maintaining the two sections of the *Miserere* as distinct series even while linking them to one another through the mediating *Sainte Face*—a representation resisting verisimilitude. The deliberate decision to make the *Sainte Face* the lynchpin linking (albeit barely) divinity and humanity came perhaps from the words of Pascal:

> Knowledge of God without knowledge of our wretchedness makes for pride.
> Knowledge of our wretchedness without knowledge of God makes for despair.
> Knowledge of Jesus Christ is central, because in him we find both God and our wretchedness.[43]

Dieu et misère. Miserere et Guerre. Annie Dillard reframes this ancient conundrum in new language:

> Scholarship has long distinguished between two strains of thought that proceed in the West from human knowledge of God. In one, the ascetic's metaphysic, the world is far from God. Emanating from God, and linked to him by Christ, the world is yet infinitely other than God, furled away from him like the end of a long banner falling. This notion makes, to my mind, a vertical line of the world, a great chain of burning. The more accessible and universal view, held by Eckhart and by many peoples in various forms, is scarcely different from pantheism: that the world is immanation, that God is in the thing, and eternally present here, if nowhere else…The notion of immanence needs a handle, and the two ideas themselves need a link, so that life can mean aught to the one, and Christ to the other.[44]

Without realism, *Miserere* can seem to repress the reality of evil; without mercy, the reality of *Guerre* can lead to despair. The bloody face of Christ imprinted on the Sudarium represents both the evil inculcating despair and the mercy offering hope. In maintaining the distinction between image and prototype, *Miserere* embodies its own solution to the problem of representation in an incarnational religion.

1949–1953: A Catholic Artist?

After the publication of *Miserere*, Rouault continued to paint, especially biblical and "mythical" (*légendaires*) landscapes, and the radiant colors in this post-autumnal era of his life were anything but wintry. In 1951, as he turned eighty, Rouault painted the exquisitely poignant *Vieux Faubourg (mère et enfants)* **(no. 69)**, a gesture calling to mind works from 1925-1929, i.e., retrospective remembrances produced shortly after his mother's death in 1924. The small size only adds to the quality of intimacy in this emotional evocation of the working-class mother and children. Ironically, in spite of its title, the brilliantly colored mother and children are not in any setting recognizable as an urban one, let alone an impoverished *faubourg*. They are, rather, in a landscape, on a hilltop, perhaps at the Ends of the Earth (and of History), doubling as Notre-Dame de la Fin-des-Terres, ever vigilant.

Official honors feted Rouault's eightieth year. He was promoted to commander of the Legion of Honor even as he refrained from entering the Institut. On June 6, the Centre catholique des Intellectuels français sponsored a conference in his honor at the Palais de Chaillot.[45] Abbé Morel's documentary film *Miserere* was produced for the occasion. Because Rouault had such fervent advocates closely aligned with "Catholicism"—like Morel, Dominican Fr. Marie-Alain Couturier, and of course, Jacques Maritain—a half-century of repeated claims about Rouault being a "religious" and specifically "Catholic" artist has ossified into urban legend.

However, it is something of an invented tradition.[46] For a more accurate reading of the 1951 tribute by the Centre catholique des Intellectuels français, it should be noted that in the previous year, one of the two prints from Rouault's *Miserere* series intended for inclusion in Rome's "gigantic 1950 jubilee exhibition of religious art" had been rejected.[47] This contextualizes a comment by Isabelle Rouault about the installation of a stained-

glass window (a variant on *Véronique*, **no. 67**, executed in 1946-47 by glazier Paul Bony) in the church of Notre-Dame de Toute-Grâce in Plateau d'Assy.[48] (The window had been commissioned by Couturier.) Isabelle later reported that her father had been "highly pleased finally to see one of his works in a church" since it was, "if only in a limited way, a form of ecclesiastical recognition."[49]

As Sheila Nowinski suggests in this volume,[50] Rouault was just one particular actor playing a part in a much larger postwar Catholic drama. The "modern religious art" wars of the 1950s were local theaters in which the integralists battled modernism, a contest symbolized by Pope Pius XII's encyclical *Humani Generis* (1950), seen as a censure of the *nouvelle théologie* movement. (As early as 1947, Maritain, France's ambassador to the Vatican, wrote Georges Bernanos that "the climate in Rome—'the worst I have ever known'—had become 'depressing and stifling. One has to make a physical effort that consumes the nerves.'"[51]) The year 1951, in which Rouault turned eighty, was especially contentious. In January, Catholic integralists used the modern pieces installed at the church at Assy as a pretext for denouncing Fr. Couturier's work in particular and that of the French Dominicans in general. The crucifix done by Germaine Richier was removed by the bishop of Annecy in April. On June 10, the official Vatican press organ, *L'Osservatore Romano*, published a front-page attack on the Dominicans, just four days after the Parisian conference honoring Rouault. The Vatican "raid on the Dominicans" would take place in 1954.[52]

In 1952, at age eighty-one, Rouault received a national tribute in a retrospective held at the Musée National d'Art Moderne. In 1953, the retrospective traveled to the United States, exhibiting at Cleveland, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, part of a broader Franco-American cultural exchange creating a postwar transatlantic alliance.[53] From there, the exhibition traveled westward to Japan, showing in Tokyo and Osaka. As with the Munich exhibition of 1949, the Japanese location and date situate this *Miserere* reception in one of the hottest spots of the Cold War. In April 1952, Japan had once again become an independent state, following the Allied occupation; in July 1953, an armistice had brought a cease fire agreement to the Korean War (begun in June 1950). Although Rouault could not possibly have foreseen it, his art would become an important element in a complex cultural web of international exchanges aimed at building Cold War alliances.

In fitting gestures that brought an aspect of Rouault's life full circle, forty-two years after his pseudonymous preface written for the Galerie Druet, Jacques Maritain wrote the text for *Georges Rouault*, an illustrated collection published by Harry N. Abrams in 1952, as well as the "Foreword" to the 1953 MoMA retrospective's catalogue.[54] Maritain, now a professor at Princeton University and a genuinely transatlantic personality, sharply contrasted the old and the new:

> Last July I visited Rouault in Paris. We spoke of the old days, and of his present glory; I told him of my joy about the tribute of universal admiration he is now receiving. He did not seem impressed by this glory—rather a little surprised…
>
> Well, the memory of the long years of ordeal and abandonment, during which everybody lamented the obstinacy with which he was spoiling his gifts and plunging into ugliness, may reassure him indeed. His present glory is the purest glory a great painter has ever known in his lifetime.[55]

However, here again we should not take Maritain's words as being overly representative of the ecclesiastical establishment. A more mainstream view might be found in an essay entitled "L'Art cruel" (Cruel Art), appearing in the June 1953 issue of the Jesuit review *Études*. Reflecting on Rouault's work, the essayist wrote: "What astonishes us at first is that these most authentically religious and Christian works seem aggressive and cruel…His work is at the point of separation, a little like that of Bernanos and Graham Greene."[56]

The author's comparison was apt. *Under Satan's Son*, Bernanos's novel published in 1927, had been attacked as heresy by mainstream critics.[57]

And in 1953, just as the *Études* essay appeared, Greene's novel, *The Power and the Glory* (1940), was denounced to the Holy Office of the Inquisition. The Office reviewed the book and delivered its verdict: "altogether adverse." While the author's intention had been "to bring out the victory of the power and the glory of the Lord in spite of man's wretchedness," ruled the Holy Office, this aim had not been achieved. Rather, "the latter element"—that is, human wretchedness—seemed "to carry the day."[58] This 1953 episode demonstrates again the extent to which these "culture wars" of religious art and literature were small local theaters on which the larger drama of postwar Catholic theological battles were being fought. In the literature of Bernanos and Greene and in the visual depictions of Rouault, it seemed to some that divine grace and human nature were locked in mortal combat—and that grace never seemed to triumph.

Thus, we should be careful about taking too seriously an invented tradition of the 1960s—Rouault the "Catholic artist"—as a description of his own lived experienced. Although Pope Pius XII (as noted by Danielle Molinari[59]) had sent Rouault an "honorary decoration" in 1953, generally speaking, an ecclesiastical openness to a vision like Rouault's could not have been easily tolerated by the Catholic institution during his pontificate (which ended with Pius's death on October 9, 1958, eight months after the artist's). Rather, it was Giovanni Battista Montini, a fervent admirer of Jacques Maritain's work after having read *Art and Scholasticism* (1920) in his twenties, who would take up the cause of reconciling religion and modern art during his reign as Pope Paul VI (1963-1978).[60] Indeed, in October 1965, when Paul VI became the first pope in history to visit the United States, his gift to the United Nations in New York City was a painting of the Crucifixion by Rouault. Given that the principal message of his address to the assembly had been a condemnation of war—"*jamais plus la guerre, jamais plus la guerre!*" (never again war, never again war!)—it is appropriate that the souvenir of his visit is a work by the artist who created *Miserere et Guerre*.[61]

1956–1958: And Sarah Laughed

In 1956, at age 85, Rouault laid down his paintbrush, too fatigued to work any longer. Just before doing so, he painted one of his final great works: *Sarah* (1956, **no. 70**), a brilliant showcase of his late life hieraticism. It seems difficult to imagine that Rouault, steeped in scripture, did not intend to evoke the figure of Sarah, wife of Abraham. Sarah had been childless her entire life. In her extreme old age, when she is told by visiting strangers that she will conceive and bear a child within a year, she laughs in disbelief. In response, God questions Abraham: "Why did Sarah laugh, and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?' Is anything too wonderful for the LORD?"[62] If *Sarah* can be taken as representative of Rouault's own summing up of his life, the message would seem to be: reversals and inversions can come at any time. "Every view of things that is not wonderful is false."[63]

Pierre Courthion makes this observation about Rouault's final days: "According to Mme. Rouault, the painter suffered more when he was unable to work than from any physical pain during the last years of his life. Indeed, one felt in him a certain impatience, similar to that of the traveler all packed and eager to leave."[64] Like his beloved *Cirque de l'Étoile filante*, forever wandering from one corner of the earth to another, Rouault was a *peregrinus* to the very end, at least in spirit.

Georges Rouault died on February 13, 1958, three months short of his eighty-seventh birthday. His funeral serves as an example of reversals and inversions. In 1901, due to the anti-clerical Law of Associations, Rouault and Huysmans had to leave behind the Abbey of Ligugé, deserted by the forced expulsion of the monks, as well as the dream of creating an artists' colony. In 1905, Rouault had been disgusted by the removal of crucifixes from republican courtrooms, the most visible symbol of the Act of Separation of Church and State. Fifty-three years later, on February 17, he received a state funeral from the postwar Fourth Republic of France. The official orations were delivered following the

Requiem Mass, after the congregation had moved out from the private sphere (of the church of Saint-Germain-des-Prés) into the public sphere of the *parvis*, that is, the large outdoor square in front of the church **(fig. 5)**.[65]

The square bordering Saint-Germain-des-Prés is the quintessential expression of Baudelaire's definitions of both beauty and modernity, simultaneously constituted by two dialectical elements: the eternal and the ephemeral. On one side sits the ancient abbey church. Originally built in 542 to house King Childebert I's relic of the True Cross, it had to be rebuilt in the 900s after being destroyed by the Vikings. Ruined and restored repeatedly through the centuries, it exemplifies the eternal.

On the opposite side of the square sits the café Les Deux Magots. In 1958, it was the existentialist hangout of Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir. Before that it had been the early-century hotspot for the cubists Picasso and Guillaume Apollinaire. They in turn had taken tables formerly occupied by the symbolist poets Verlaine and Mallarmé. Susceptible to every change of tide and wind, Les Deux Magots defines the fashionable.

Fig. 5. The coffin of Georges Rouault lies in the Place Saint-Germain during his state funeral on February 17, 1958, as French actor Jean Marchat of the Comédie-Française reads a message from André Loth of the Institut de France. AFP / AFP / Getty Images

Between these two poles of ephemerality and eternity, the body of Georges Rouault lay in state. In death as in life, he occupied the borderlands, boundary waters, dangerous margins in which fluid identities create anxiety for those seeking rigid delineations—between ancient and modern, Catholic and French, sacred and profane, mercy and war, reality and semblance. But then, as Mary Douglas has observed,

> ...of course, the yearning for rigidity is in us all. It is part of our human condition to long for hard lines and clear concepts. When we have them we have to either face the fact that some realities elude them, or else blind ourselves to the inadequacy of the concepts.

The final paradox of the search for purity is that it is an attempt to force experience into logical categories of non-contradiction. But experience is not amenable and those who make the attempt find themselves led into contradiction.[66]

Rouault's true home was on the road: a perpetual *peregrinus*. In death, he lay in the space he had straddled in life: *en marge des doctrines*.

1 "Peregrinus" is Latin for both foreigner and traveler; see discussion above, Schloesser, "1921-1929: Jazz Age Graphic Shock," in this volume. For "Toute vue des choses qui n'est pas étrange est fausse" (Everything that is not strange [i.e., bizarre or foreign] is false), see Caroline Walker Bynum, "Wonder," *The American Historical Review*, 102/1 (February 1997): 1-26, see p. 1.

2 Charles Péguy, "Les Suppliants Parallèles," originally printed in *Les Cahiers de la Quinzaine* 7 (December 17, 1905); qtd. in Daniel Halévy, *Charles Péguy and Les Cahiers de la Quinzaine*, trans. Ruth Bethell (New York: Longmans, 1947) 108; qtd. in Brenna Moore, "Leaning Over the Abyss: Raïssa Maritain, the Allure of Suffering and the French Catholic Revival," (Dissertation, Harvard Univ., 2008) 55. I am very grateful to Brenna for this passage from Péguy.

3 Letter of Georges Rouault to André Suarès (Beaumont-sur-Sarthe, September 4, 1939), *Correspondance [de] Georges Rouault [et] André Suarès* (Paris: Gallimard, 1960) 325.

4 Rouault and Suarès, *Correspondance* 325, 326.

5 Letter of Georges Rouault to André Suarès (Beaumont-sur-Sarthe, January 20, 1940), 328, 329. *Homo homini lupus* is a Latin maxim translated as "Man is a wolf to man." Rouault used this as the legend for *Miserere* plate 37 (1926, OG 90f), a reflection on the First World War depicting a skeleton wearing a soldier's hat; he also used it for one of his major works, an oil painting depicting a dangling man who has been hung to death as an urban setting burns in the distant background. Finished between 1944 and 1948 and donated by the artist to the Musée d'Art Moderne (presently the Centre Pompidou) in 1949, it served as a brutally frank comment on the Second World War. See OP 2401. Sigmund Freud famously used this legend after the Great War as well. See Freud, "Civilization and its Discontents" (written 1929, published 1930), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. and ed. James Strachey, 24 vols. (London: Hogarth, 1927-1931) 21: 64-145, see p. 111.

6 For this material and following, see Pierre Matisse Foundation archives: Folder PMG Artists Rouault 1940 Exhibition. (Group, PMG) 1940, The Morgan Library and Museum, New York. I am deeply grateful to Robert Parks, Director of Library and Museum Services, for having communicated these documents.

7 Michel Anthonioz, *Verve: The Ultimate Review of Art and Literature (1937-1960)*, trans. Mark Paris (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1988).

8 *Verve* 4 (November 15, 1938); *Verve* 5-6 (Spring 1939). See illustrations in François Chapon, *Le livre des livres de/ The Illustrated Books by Rouault* (Monaco: A. Sauret; Paris: M. Trinckvel, 1992) 234-37. For a list of Rouault's contributions to *Verve*, see Anthonioz 392-93; see also entry for André Suarès, 393.

9 Emphasis original. Letter of Tériade to Georges Rouault (April 30, 1941), Fondation Georges Rouault; qtd. by Anne Montfort, "Tériade, Matisse, Rouault," in the exhibition guide to Rouault-Matisse correspondances: 27 octobre 2006 – 11 février 2007, Musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris, n.p.

10 Rouault, "Visages Réels ou Imaginaires," *Verve* 5/6 (January – March 1939) 120. Villon's mother, poor and illiterate, abandoned him at a young age after Villon's father died. Villon was raised by Guillaume de Villon, chaplain of St. Benoit-le-Bientourne.

11 See essays by Anne Davenport and Tara Ward in this volume.

12 Pascal, *Pensées* Pléiade 126 / Lafuma 136 / Sellier 168. Fragments of Pascal's *Pensées* are referenced according to their Pléiade / Lafuma / Sellier numbers. For Pléiade, see Pascal, *Oeuvres complètes*, 2 vols. (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2000), vol. 2; for Lafuma, see Pascal, *Pensées*, trans. A.J. Krailsheimer, rev. ed. (New York: Penguin, 1995); for Sellier, see Pascal, *Pensées*, ed. and trans. Roger Ariew (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2005).

13 Pascal, *Pensées* Pléiade 393 /Lafuma 414 /Sellier 33.

14 For characters, see Anne Davenport, Gael Mooney, and Tara Ward in this volume.

15 Georges Rouault, *Divertissement* (Paris: Tériade, 1943) 3; qtd. in Davenport, "The Mask of Villon: Neo-Medievalist Realism in Rouault's *Divertissement*," in this volume; see note 27.

16 See OP 55 and 1943.

17 Letter of Georges Rouault to André Suarès (May 13, 1939), Rouault and Suarès, *Correspondance* 319.

18 Claude Roulet, *Elucidation du poème de Stéphane Mallarmé : Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard* (Neuchâtel: Ides et calendes; Geneva: A. Kundig, 1943).

19 Roulet, "Foreword," Georges Rouault, *Soliloques* (Neuchâtel: Ides et Calendes, 1944) 13.

20 Rouault, "L'Exode," *Soliloques* 191.

21 Rouault, "Prière," *Soliloques* 164. The word "*jarret*," normally used in butcher shops, refers to a shin, shank, or hock (of an animal). The implication is that the court of Herod is a "meat market" in which Salomé sells herself as a "piece of meat."

22 James Thrall Soby, *Georges Rouault. Paintings and Prints* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1945) 5.

23 A comparison with Rouault's prewar depiction of Veronica as a seated woman demonstrates how strong the hieratic style is. See *Véronique* (1938, OP 1898).

24 Pierre Courthion, *Georges Rouault* (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1962) 296.

25 Angela Lampe, "Work in progress. Les œuvres inachevées," *Georges Rouault, forme, couleur, harmonie,* catalogue published for the Musée d'art moderne et contemporain de Strasbourg exhibition, 10 November 2006 to 18 March 2007, commissariat Fabrice Hergott (Strasbourg: Musées de Strasbourg, 2006) 214–21, see p. 214.

26 "Up in Smoke," *Time* magazine (November 15, 1948): http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,853441,00.html. Accessed 26 June 2008.

27 Letter of Georges Rouault to André Suarès (End of May 1945), qtd. in Bernard Dorival and Isabelle Rouault, *Rouault: l'œuvre peint*, 2 vols. (Monte-Carlo: Éditions André Sauret, 1988) 332. The OP numbers are those assigned to Rouault's works in this catalogue raisonné.

28 I am deeply grateful to Gilles Rouault for communicating this information.

29 Georges Rouault, *La Galerie des garets présente Miserere de Georges Rouault: du 27 novembre au 21 décembre 1948* (Paris: La Galerie, 1948); Rouault, *Miserere et guerre: 59 aquatints: [exhibition] February 14 to March 5, 1949* (New York: Kleemann Galleries, 1949); Rouault, *Miserere* (Stuck-Villa: Galerie Günther Franke, 1949).

30 See Schloesser, "Notes on the *Miserere* plates exhibited in *Mystic Masque*," in this volume.

31 See archives of the Trianon Press (Paris) held today at the University of California at Santa Cruz: "Correspondence and documents related to the 1950 publication of Georges Rouault's *Miserere* by the Trianon Press, designed by Arnold Fawcus with an introduction by Anthony Blunt, printed by Aulard & Cie and distributed by Faber and Faber. Also contains material related to the 1952 reprinting of the work by the Museum of Modern Art (Monroe Wheeler)." English Archival Material 23 folders (1949–1953).

32 For image see figure in Schloesser, "Notes on the *Miserere* plates exhibited in *Mystic Masque*"; and also François Chapon and Isabelle Rouault, *Rouault: œuvre gravé*, 2 vols. (Monte-Carlo: Éditions André Sauret, 1978) 2:319, cancelled plate 151. The OG numbers are those assigned to Rouault's works in this catalogue raisonné.

33 Frédéric Duran, *Miserere* (Paris: Comptoir des Techniciens du Film et Films du Temps, 1951); cited in Hergott, *Forme, couleur, harmonie* 265.

34 For this theological aspect see both Roberto Goizueta and James Keenan in this volume.

35 Robert Frost, "A Servant to Servants," *North of Boston*, 2nd ed. (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1915). 64–72, see p. 66.

36 Gustave Thibon (1903-2001), qtd. in Gabriel Marcel, "The Ego and its Relation to Others" (November 1941), *Homo Viator: Introduction to a Metaphysic of Hope*, trans. Emma Craufurd (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1951) 12–28, see p. 28. In 1941, Thibon, the "philosopher-peasant," was on his farm caring for Simone Weil. After she died in 1943, he became her literary executor and published her works posthumously.

37 "The insistence on making a representation that abjures its own powers of narrative and optical resolution corresponds to *a whole doctrine of sacred ignorance*: God's presence is felt and known in the failure of representation, not its success." Norman Bryson, review of Georges Didi-Huberman, *Devant l'Image: Question posée aux fins de l'histoire de l'art* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1990), in *The Art Bulletin* 75/2 (June 1993): 336–37, see p. 336. For Rouault's anti-realist method that avoids both perspective and chiaroscuro, see John McCoy in this volume.

38 Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E.B. Ashton (New York: Continuum, 1973) 362.

39 For helpful overviews see Ann Parry, "The caesura of the Holocaust in Martin Amis's *Time's Arrow* and Bernard Schlink's *The Reader*," *Journal of European Studies* 29 (1999): 249–67; Alan Milchman and Alan Rosenberg, "The Unlearned Lessons of the Holocaust," *Modern Judaism* 13/2 (May 1993): 177–90. See also Benjamin C. Hutchens, *Levinas: A Guide for the Perplexed* (New York: Continuum, 2004) 81–88.

40 Jorge Semprún, *Literature or Life* (New York: Viking, 1997) 88; qtd. in Parry 249.

41 David Freedberg, *The Power of Images. Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1989) 206.

42 "*La théorie byzantine de l'image est paradigmatique, parce que plus qu'aucune autre elle révèle une conscience aiguë de la nécessité de préciser la distinction entre image et prototype.*" David Freedberg, "Les Images dans les Rêves," *Crises de l'image religieuse/ Krisen religiöser Kunst*, eds. Olivier Christin and Dario Gamboni (Paris: Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 1999) 33–53, see p. 50; cf. Freedberg, "Holy Images and Other Images," *The Art of Interpeting*, ed. Susan C. Scott (University Park: The Pennsylvania State Univ., 1996) 68-87. "The problem of inherence, I would argue, is general for all images and not just holy ones. In this respect, just as in every other, the Byzantine theology of images is exemplary for all subsequent image theory. It may not be wholly explanatory, but it is paradigmatic." Freedberg, "Holy Images" 74.

43 Pascal, *Pensées* Pléiade 181/Lafuma 192/Sellier 225. Fragments of Pascal's *Pensées* are referenced according to their Pléiade / Lafuma / Sellier numbers. For Pléiade, see Pascal, *Oeuvres complètes*, 2 vols. (Paris:

Éditions Gallimard, 2000), vol. 2; for Lafuma, see Pascal, *Pensées*, trans. A.J. Krailsheimer, rev. ed. (New York: Penguin, 1995); for Sellier, see Pascal, *Pensées*, ed. and trans. Roger Ariew (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2005). On hope as the mean between presumption and despair, see Stephen Schloesser, "The Unbearable Lightness of Being: Re-Sourcing Catholic Intellectual Traditions," *Cross Currents* 58/1 (Spring 2008): 65–94, esp. 83–85.

44 Annie Dillard, "Holy the Firm" (1977), *The Annie Dillard Reader* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1994) 425–55, see p. 452.

45 For the Centre's vision and mission, see J. Tavares, "Le Centre catholique des intellectuels français. Le dialogue comme négociation symbolique," *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales* 38 (1981): 49–62.

46 E. J. Hobsbawm and T. O. Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1983).

47 William S. Rubin, *Modern Sacred Art and the Church at Assy* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1961) 95. I am grateful to Catherine Brannen for directing me to this passage.

48 Dorival and Rouault, *l'Œuvre peint* 2:301. Five windows are listed for Assy: *Passion (Christ de profil)* (1941-42), *Véronique* (1946–47), *Flagellation (Christ aux outrages)* (1948-49), *"Il a été maltraité et opprimé..."(Bouquet I)* (1949), and *"...et il n'a pas ouvert la bouche" (Bouquet II)* (1949).

49 Isabelle Rouault, qtd. in Rubin 93. I am grateful to Catherine Brannen for directing me to this passage.

50 See Sheila Nowinski in this volume.

51 Letter of Jacques Maritain to Georges Bernanos (October 5, 1947), Maritain Archives; qtd. in Jean-Luc Barré, *Jacques & Raïssa Maritain: Beggars for Heaven*, trans. Bernard E. Doering (Notre Dame: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 2005) 396.

52 Celso Costantini, "Dell' Arte sacra deformatrice," *Osservatore Romano* (June 10, 1951), qtd. in Rubin, 54. Thomas O'Meara, O.P., "Raid on the Dominicans: The Repression of 1954," *America* 170/4 (February 5, 1994): 8–16.

53 Vanessa R. Schwartz, *It's so French!: Hollywood, Paris, and the Making of Cosmopolitan Film Culture* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2007); Christopher Endy, *Cold War Holidays: American Tourism in France* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2004)

54 Jacques Maritain and Georges Rouault, *Georges Rouault* (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1952).

55 Jacques Maritain, "Foreword," *Rouault: Retrospective Exhibition* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1953) 3–4, at 3. After leaving his position as Ambassador to the Vatican in 1948, Jacques Maritain had been a professor at Princeton University. For these years, see Barré 395–400.

56 Jean Onimus, "L'Art cruel," *Études* 86/277 (June 1953): 344–55; qtd. in Rubin, 96. I am grateful to Catherine Brannen for this citation.

57 Stephen Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism: Mystic Modernism in Postwar Paris, 1919-1933* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 2005) 256–61.

58 Stephen Schloesser, "Altogether Adverse," *America* 183 (11 November 2000): 8–12.

59 "The Catholic church, which had been unable to understand Rouault's work or to recognize its spirituality, came to terms with his art after World War II.... In 1953 Pope Pius XII sent Rouault an honorary decoration, and at the service following the artist's state funeral an address was delivered by Abbé Morel at the church of Saint-Germain-des-Prés in Paris. After his death the profound and sincere spirituality of Rouault's art was at last fully acknowledged." Danielle Molinari, "Rouault, Georges," in Grove Art Online. Oxford Art Online, http://www.oxfordart-online.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T074150. Accessed 24 June 2008.

60 Paul VI's endeavor met with mixed success. *Time* magazine reported the opening of the Vatican's collection of 20th-century religious art in 1974: "Three things can be said at once about this collection. First, it represents a decent and sincere intention. Second, it contains a smattering of respectable works of art: a set of Matisse chasubles from Venice, a cast of Rodin's Hand of God, some Rouault aquatints and so forth. Third, with such few exceptions, it is an aesthetic swamp. If some mischievous curator had been asked to assemble a study collection of rhetorical sham, displaying all the cliches of modern art at their meridian of pious triviality, he could hardly have done better." *Time* (August 5, 1974). http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,879439,00.html

61 Pope Paul VI, "Discours du Pape Paul VI à l'organisation des Nations Unies à l'occasion du 20ème anniversaire de l'organisation," October 4, 1965. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/speeches/1965/index.htm For English translation, see http://www.christusrex.org/www1/pope/welcome.html. Both accessed 26 June 2008.

62 Genesis 18. 13-14. NRSV.

63 Bynum 26.

64 Courthion 304.

65 For a spare yet moving account of Rouault's funeral, see Claude Roulet, *Rouault, souvenirs* (Neuchâtel: H. Messeiller, 1961) 317–20.

66 Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger. An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (1966; New York: Routledge, 2002) 163.

French Resistance: Rouault's Partisan History of the Modern

Tara Ward

Georges Rouault has not faired well in histories of Modern art. Despite the fact that he studied alongside Matisse in Moreau's studio and was represented by Ambroise Vollard, today Rouault is rarely mentioned in the same breath as Cézanne or Picasso.[1] However, there was a time when he seemed poised to join the Modern pantheon. In 1945, James Thrall Soby organized a retrospective of his work at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Such a show amounted to canonization at the time, which Soby acknowledged in his 1947 monograph on the artist based on the exhibition, by saying: Rouault "emerges as one of the few major figures in 20th century painting."[2] While paying homage to and historicizing Rouault's religious convictions, Soby positioned the artist as heir to Cézanne and counterpoint to Matisse—a place of honor, it should be noted, that is normally reserved for Pablo Picasso.[3]

Yet Soby's book also recognized the tenuous position of this artist in histories of Modern art. It begins: "Georges Rouault: a solitary figure in an era of group manifestoes and shared directions."[4] Those joint activities had already been turned into a master narrative of progress by the very institution in which Soby was working. In 1936 the first director of MoMA, Alfred Barr, published a diagram in the catalogue to a show entitled *Cubism and Abstract Art* (**fig. 1**).[5] Beginning with van Gogh, Gauguin, Cézanne, and Seurat in the 1890s, the chart draws arrows through a mess of styles in the early part of the twentieth century down

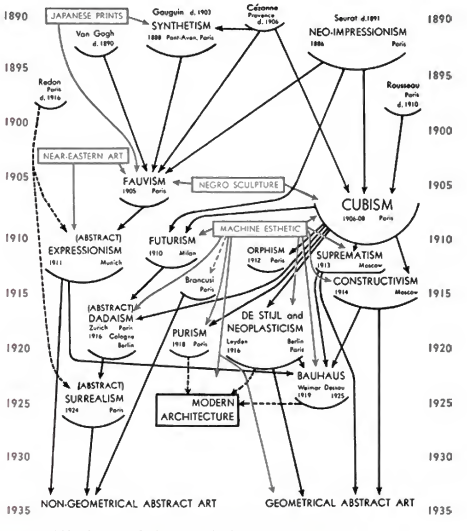


Fig. 1. Alfred Barr, *Cubism and Abstract Art*, 1936.

to one of two options available at the bottom edge of the page: Geometrical or Non-Geometrical Abstract Art. Barr simplified the history of modern painting to a systematic march toward abstraction, leaving Rouault's figurative work outside the main line of progress.

Clement Greenberg, the preeminent art critic of the twentieth century and champion of abstract art, was more violent about casting Rouault aside. He panned the MoMA show going so far as to cast Rouault as a sexual predator preying on viewers. His May 1945 review in *The Nation* states:

> The fault with Rouault does not lie precisely in the extruded emotion or in the bombast, but rather in a lack of deference. He refuses to let his intentions be shaped by the etiquette and physical conditions of his art; histrionic impatience, the anxiety to express, makes him try to rape the medium and anticipate the spectator's emotions by presenting a fait accompli before the fact—there the spectator's emotion is in the picture before he has had time to feel it. He gets a portrait of the way he ought to feel. And so many of us feel guilty about emotional impotence that we hurry to assent.[6]

Greenberg's disdain for Rouault was a function of his larger scheme for understanding Modern art. The critic argued that Modern art was different from all that had come before because it investigated the fundamental conditions of its media, and he outlined a history of painting that showed a progressive movement toward flatness, recognition of the shape of the canvas, and abstraction.[7] Focusing attention on the formal relationships in a given work of art and the mental process of constructing a piece, Greenberg's system had no place for the figures, ideas, and emotions that fascinated Rouault.

In the 1930s-1940s, Greenberg, Barr, and Soby each attempted to systematize Modern art.[8] To do so they developed a series of frameworks that explained the history of art as a logical and almost scientific progression toward a single shared ideal. For them, Modern art was above all formal, and its meanings were visible in the composition and application of paint. This required them to divorce the works from the context in which they were created and the particular interpretations available within that environment. Their evolutionary model of Modern art also prized newness and change; the value of a work of art was determined by the amount of progress it made toward the shared goal of abstract art. These systems used science as a model of how a work could be extricated from the conditions and motivations of its creation and accessed based on universal criteria that explicitly rejected nationalism and contemporary historical events. The irony of these projects is that they tended to lead to the valorization of Abstract Expression—a thoroughly historical and nationalistic project—as the innovative and all-important American addition to these collective pursuits.[9]

The universal and ineluctable logic of this idea of Modern art had its heroes, but also its causalities. Tradition, figuration, nationalism, politics, and even iconography had no place in these formal frameworks, and artists who refused to take part in the march of progress found themselves cast out of history. This was, of course, Rouault's choice, but it need not be his ultimate fate. Since the 1970s, art historians have been trying to complicate and expand the history developed by Barr and Greenberg. In lieu of one master narrative of progress, numerous and diverse stories have emerged, each with its own logic and its own goals. In *Divertissement* (1943), Rouault actually wrote one such history himself.

Divertissement is a reflection on the artist's life and art. By the time of its publication in 1943, Rouault had seen part of the French artistic avant-garde retreat back to Classicism, his own studio taken away from him, and his country occupied by an invading army.[10] Thus, rather than offering a triumphant narrative of his place in the systematic progress of Modern art, he positioned himself as part of a particularly French group of dispossessed figures. Through a tour-de-force of subtle allusions, rhetorical shifts, and metaphors he fashioned a nationalist history which served to radicalize his own work and make it a weapon in the fight against the totalitarian culture in all its forms.

The book is composed of reproductions of handwritten text interspersed with carefully framed prints depicting the downtrodden types of figures for which Rouault is best known. While the volume was mechanically produced, the quality of the paper as well as the nature of the text and the images imbues it with the quality of a medieval manuscript. This visual impression is bolstered by the presence of numerous motives inspired by the Middle Ages, as Anne Davenport skillfully shows in her essay in this volume.

The text also has a Modern side. Toward the middle of the poem, Rouault explicitly compares his work to a succession of Modern artists:

> Little page red and gold
> In this coquettish life
> Little do
> You still resemble
> The famous Rider
> Who trotted prettily
> In times long gone
> To the grand Elysian salons,
> Which I still had a chance to know.
> Formerly rejected Courbet,
> Ever-debated Manet,
> Cézanne excommunicated,
> Discreet Delaunay.[11]

Despite the mention of Courbet, Manet, and Cézanne, the passage does not offer a formalist history like those developed by Barr or Greenberg. Rouault insists that the visual similarity between *Divertissement* and the work of the earlier artists is minimal even though he goes on to trumpet their importance. Instead the link between these figures and Rouault is drawn through a series of adjectives: "rejected," "debated," "excommunicated." All these terms imply a separation from and dismissal by the larger culture. Courbet, Manet, Cézanne, and therefore Rouault are avant-garde, bohemian characters who offer models of opposition.[12]

Through the reference to the "Elysian salons," the list also creates an implicit chronology of exhibitions that challenged the Academic salons. Courbet built his Realist Pavilion for the 1855 World's Fair after his work was rejected from the official show of French art, Manet's *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* was displayed at the first Salon des Refusés in 1863, and Cézanne's avant-garde reputation was established by a retrospective of his previously almost unknown work at the 1904 Salon d'Automne. Thus Rouault is tracing a history of avant-garde artists and the ways they antagonized official culture.

However, the last of the painters Rouault mentions, Robert Delaunay, does not fit neatly into any of the narratives we have addressed thus far. Formalist historians like Barr and Greenberg saw Pablo Picasso as next in the line of succession. In fact, as Gordon Hughes has pointed out, Barr's diagram shows Orphism, Delaunay's style, as a dead end.[13] While he did take part in the infamous Salon des Indépendants of 1911, he also lived long enough to be officially sanctioned. Along with his wife Sonia, Robert Delaunay was commissioned to do large-scale murals for the transportation buildings of the 1937 World's Fair. His French nationality must account, at least in part, for Rouault's choosing him over the Spaniard Picasso; however, in characterizing Delaunay as "discreet" Rouault hints at something more.

While Robert Delaunay is best known for his highly colored images of modernity and his abstract paintings, he was, like Rouault, interested in the particularly French Medieval tradition. Delaunay credited his experience of the late Gothic church of Saint Séverin, located in the Latin Quarter, with being the first step in the development of his mature style.[14] He called the series of paintings he did of the church's ambulatory "destructive" in that they allowed him to break with the twin legacies of the Italian Renaissance: linear perspective and local color.[15]

After the *Saint Séverin* series (1909-10), Delaunay began to focus on modern life doing a number of paintings of the Eiffel Tower followed by a sequence of increasingly colored and progressively more abstract images of the city that he called *Windows* (1912). In her seminal *Robert Delaunay: the Discovery of Simultaneity*, Sherry Buckberrough links Delaunay's style to the theory of Unanimism developed by Jules Romains.[16] The philosophy was influenced by the Bergsonian notion of durée and forwarded an idea of the interconnectedness

of individuals and times. The literary production associated with Unanimism often focused on the disenfranchised elements of French society and the relationship between the Medieval and the Modern. Thus one way of reading Rouault's characterization of Delaunay as "discreet" is as a reference to these early works that were subtly inspired by the Medieval.

The images Rouault uses in this passage also suggest something more. Throughout this section of *Divertissement*, Rouault repeatedly emphasizes color and circular motifs: he both begins and ends with the combination of red and gold, the passage concludes with a reference to a ball, and "caracole" denotes the movement of a horse and rider in a circle or semi-circle. These themes allude to Robert Delaunay's painting, in particular to what the painter termed his "constructive" phase, which lasted from 1912 until his death in 1941 (just two years before the publication of *Divertissement*).[17] Beginning with a series of images of the sun and the moon (1912-13), Delaunay almost exclusively constructed his paintings through a system of color combination taken from the nineteenth century color theorist, M.E. Chevreul. The chemist's *De la loi du contraste simultané des couleurs et de l'assortiment des objets colorés* (On the law of simultaneous contrast of colors and of the matching of colored objects), published in 1839, was a product of his work as Director of Dyes at the Royal Manufactures at Gobelins, where his studies of optics were undertaken as a quality control measure for the factory's tapestry production.[18] In the text Chevreul presents his scientific findings as a means of systematically preserving the aesthetic legacy of French decorative and fine arts by providing guidelines for working artists.[19]

Much of Chevreul's book delineates the illusions created by placing certain colors next to each other. He termed this effect "simultaneous contrast" and noted that it created apparent changes in both intensity and size. Georges Seurat and his Neo-Impressionist followers used Chevreul's discoveries to portray light with their technique of divisionism or pointillism.[20] Robert Delaunay's paintings increased the size of the colored areas, but maintained divisionism's interest in optical effects and its dedication to circular forms, which can also be seen in the color wheels and other charts in Chevreul's text. Thus Robert Delaunay's paintings subtly evoke a history of French color application that can be traced back to the fifteenth-century founding of the factory at Gobelins.

With the above in mind, a very different idea of the progression from Courbet through Manet and Cézanne to Delaunay emerges. I would like to suggest that for Rouault these four figures represented a history of resistance and a specifically French lineage of Modern art. Courbet was "rejected" because he used the techniques of history painting to portray common people of France, as in his *Burial at Ornans* (1849).[21] Manet was "debated" because he challenged the Italian Renaissance by, for example, turning Titian's *Venus of Urbino* (1538) into a contemporary prostitute in *Olympia* (1863).[22] The "excommunicated" Cézanne took up the battle by creating an alternative to the linear perspective developed by Brunelleschi and Alberti.[23] And Delaunay's discretion lay in the fact that his innovative colors quietly suggested a French history of art going back to the Middle Ages. They all fought against a foreign invasion into the French culture, an incursion that had been sanctioned by the French Academy's adoption of the techniques of the Italian Renaissance. Given the historical context in which Rouault was writing, this history of Modern art as a French resistance to a foreign foe must be seen as having political implications. The French government had accepted German occupation in 1940 and by tracing this particular narrative Rouault was suggesting possible modes of opposition.

An historical call-to-arms is also present in his repeated use of the figure of the Caracole. In the page surrounding the list of the artists' names, Rouault mentions riders and riding four times. It is a personal motif, both in *Divertissement* and the artist's larger oeuvre, which is connected to Rouault's interest in circus imagery and his hopes for the future. Throughout the text, the rider circulates among the cast of dispossessed figures as a reminder of their noble lineage. Just below the mention of Delaunay, the poem implores "Why don't you love him/Our Rider?" This call to remember the French heritage is undoubtedly part of the

poem's neo-medievalism, related to its repeated uses of the medieval poet François Villon as a central character [24] However, coming as it does in the midst of a discussion of Modern art, the Caracole also evokes another aspect of the French avant-garde. In the years preceding World War I, a group of French artists developed a form of Cubism that was in direct opposition to the work of Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque. The loose collective included Albert Gleizes, Jean Metzinger, and Roger de la Fresnaye as well as Jacques Villon and Raymond Duchamp-Villon, all of whom were interested not only in creating a new type of non-Academic art, but also in linking their artistic production to French Medieval traditions.

One source for the Caracole motif is visible in Albert Gleizes's *La Chasse* from 1911. Formally the painting is a more highly colored version of Cézanne-influenced early Cubist fragmentation; however, the subject matter is neither a pure landscape nor a modern urban scene. A series of at least three riders grounds the left-hand side of the canvas while, in the distance of the upper right, a quaint village emerges from the landscape. The hunt is an historical subject, and the painting is a manifestation of Gleizes's interest in asserting his place in a particularly French artistic heritage. In his 1913 article "Le Cubisme et la tradition," published in *Montjoie!*, Gleizes explains that artists ought to eschew the influence of the Italian Renaissance and look instead to the Gallic tradition coming from the Middle Ages.[25] It refers to the "official invasion" of Italian art, but calls Gothic cathedrals "flowers," and the text is illustrated with Jacques Villon's portrait of François Villon.[26]

Gleizes's fascination with linking the Modern and the Medieval is also connected to his participation in the short-lived artists' commune, the Abbaye de Créteil.[27] Founded by Gleizes along with the writers Charles Vildrac, Georges Duhamel, René Arcos, and Henri-Martin Barzun as well as the printer Lucien Linard, the Abbaye was a socialist experiment that attempted to surmount the financial pressures imposed on artists by the bourgeoisie. From 1906 to 1908, the group rented a house in Courbevoie and financed their individual and collective activities by printing illustrated books. Theoretically the group tended to align itself with Jules Romains's Unanimism. (In fact they published the first edition of a collection of his poems entitled *La Vie unanime*.)

After the dissolution of the Abbaye, Gleizes became involved with a group of artists who met in the Parisian suburb of Puteaux. The circle centered on the Duchamp brothers, two of whom, Jacques and Raymond, adopted the surname Villon in homage to the Medieval poet. This context provides another modern precedent for Rouault's Caracole, Raymond Duchamp-Villon's *Horse* of 1914. Originally conceived as a horse and rider, at the time of the artist's death the sculpture consisted of solely of a horse composed of mechanical parts. Half-machine, half-ancient mode of transportation, the *Horse* is undoubtedly indebted to the theories forwarded at the Abbaye; however, it also relates to a series of architectural projects Duchamp-Villon was working on at the time. Kevin D. Murphy has shown that Duchamp-Villon's architectural models as well as his 1913 article comparing the Eiffel Tower to Gothic cathedrals reveal the influence of the Gothic Revival architect and theorist Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc.[28] Both saw the Gothic as a model, not just of exceptional engineering, but also of how a new and historically appropriate style might be established.[29]

In its use of the Caracole and the Medieval more generally, Rouault's *Divertissement* is a return to the Parisian milieu in which the painter established himself. The Neo-Medievalism of that context had political implications that would have been attractive to Rouault in the early 1940s. In his "Cubism, Celtism, and the Body Politic," Mark Antliff establishes a series of connections between the philosophical and artistic ideas of the Abbaye and Puteaux and Celtic League (founded in 1911).[30] The Celtic League was both nationalist and leftist. It directly opposed the monarchist Action Française, which insisted that those who did not share the group's traditional politics and classical aesthetics were pro-German. Thus by positioning himself as heir to this neo-Medieval heritage, Rouault signaled his resistance to both German and French conservatism.

Divertissement is a remarkably multivalent text and a game of cultural allusions. Within one page Rouault manages to revise and politicize the history of Modern art through sly play of references. In doing so, he opposes the progress-orientated, impersonal narratives of Barr and Greenberg, choosing instead a partisan idea of history in which a certain heritage is tied to fighting for a particular vision of the future. All of this complexity is contained with Rouault's symbol of the past: the Caracole evokes ideas of circuses and parades, but its precise definition is a military maneuver in which a cavalry regiment rides in a circle in order to arm its weapons.[31]

Rouault's place in this elaborately woven history is impossible to simplify, a fact which he acknowledges at the end of the art historical passage by calling his work "roi enfant de la balle."[32] The phrase is deeply layered. It suggests a child's toy, an inflated circus ball, and is a colloquial expression meaning the child of bohemians. "Balle" is also bullet, which allows Rouault to yet again discreetly militarize art. If Rouault has tended to be left out of histories of Modern art, it is not because his work means too little, but perhaps because, in an abstract age, it means too much.

Endnotes

1 To give but one example, a recent and highly acclaimed survey text book of twentieth century art, Hal Foster, Rosalind Krauss, Yve-Alain Bois and Benjamin Buchloh, *Art Since 1900: Modernism Antimodernism Postmodernism* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2004), does not even mention Rouault's name.

2 James Thrall Soby, *Georges Rouault: Paintings and Prints* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1947) 5.

3 See for example Anne Baldassari, Elizabeth Cowling, John Golding, and Isabelle Monod-Fontaine, *Matisse Picasso* (London: Tate Publishing, 2002).

4 Soby 5.

5 Alfred Hamilton Barr, *Cubism and Abstract Art* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1936).

6 Clement Greenberg, "Review of an Exhibition of Georges Rouault," *Clement Greenberg: Collected Essays and Criticism*, vol. 2, ed. John O'Brian (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1986) 23.

7 For Greenberg's overview of this history see "Modernist Painting," *Clement Greenberg: Collected Essays and Criticism*, vol. 4, ed. John O'Brian (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1993) 85-93.

8 For a partisan, but nonetheless informative discussion of this history, see Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom, and the Cold War* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1983).

9 Frances Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* (New York: New Press, distributed by W. W. Norton & Co., 2000). Cf. Penny M. Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 2004).

10 After World War I a number of avant-garde artists including Picasso and Léger shifted to more Classical-inspired style. The change was part of a larger cultural swing towards conservatism known as the Call to Order. See Kenneth E. Silver, *Esprit De Corps: The Art of the Parisian Avant-Garde and the First World War, 1914-1925* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1989).

11 *Divertissement* 8. When Ambroise Vollard died in 1939, his heirs barred Rouault from using the studio the dealer had provided for him. They also confiscated all the works and materials left inside. The 1940 armistice between Germany and France allowed the Nazis to occupy the Northern and Western sections of the country. The collaborationist Vichy regime was installed to govern the remaining part of the nation.

12 Given the importance of Gustave Moreau for Rouault's personal and artistic development, it is odd that he was not included in this particular history. We might

speculate that at least part of the motivation for this exclusion was the fact that Moreau was associated with the École des Beaux-Arts and, therefore, official French culture.

13 Gordon Hughes, "Envisioning Abstraction: The Simultaneity of Robert Delaunay's First Disk," *The Art Bulletin* 89, no. 2 (2007).

14 The church was begun in the eleventh century; however, much of the structure actually dates to the fifteenth century.

15 Delaunay uses this characterization consistently throughout his writings. See *Robert Delaunay, du Cubisme à l'art abstrait*, ed. Pierre Francastel (Paris: S. E. V. P. E. N., 1957).

16 Sherry A. Buckberrough, *Robert Delaunay: The Discovery of Simultaneity* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1982) 53.

17 See Francastel.

18 M. E. Chevreul, *De la loi du contraste simultané des couleurs, et de l'assortiment des objets colorés, considéré d'après cette loi* (Paris: Pitois-Levrault et cie, 1839).

Chevreul was intimately associated with the Gobelins factory. See for example: M. E. Chevreul, *Institut de France. Académie des sciences... Réponse aux allégations contenues dans un Rapport de M. A. Gruyer sur l'Exposition internationale de Londres en 1871, à propos des tapisseries des Gobelins, par M. Chevrel* (Paris: Gauthier-Villars, 1872).

Chevreul died in 1889, shortly before Rouault entered the École des Arts Décoratifs in which he studied both pottery and tapestry making. On this occasion, a new edition of the book was published with an introduction by the late author's son, Henri Chevreul: Chevreul, *De la Loi du contraste simultané des couleurs et de l'assortiment des objets colorés considéré d'après cette loi dans ses rapports avec la peinture, les tapisseries des Gobelins, les tapisseries de Beauvais pour meubles, les tapis, la mosaïque,les vitraux colorés, l'impression des étoffes, l'imprimerie, l'enluminure, la décoration des édifices, l'habillement et l'horticulture* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1889).

Chevreul's work was internationally renowned. See for example: M. E. Chevreul, *The principles of harmony and contrast of colours, and their applications to the arts*, trans. Charles Martel, 3rd ed. (London: George Bell and Sons, 1899).

In 1939, the fiftieth anniversary of Chevreul's death was observed. See Henry Germain, "L'Œuvre de Chevreul. À propos d'un cinquantenaire," *Mémoires de la Société d'Agriculture Sciences et Arts d'Angers* 14/6 (1939): 44-54.

19 In addition to knowing Chevreul's theories because of his training in tapestries and pottery, Rouault would have known the scientist more generally because he became a national celebrity in 1886 as he celebrated his hundredth birthday. M. E. Chevreul, *Célébration du centenaire de M. Chevreul. 31 août 1786 - 31 août 1886* (Rouen, 1886); Chevreul, Paul Nadar, Félix Nadar, *L'art de vivre cent ans: trois entretiens avec Monsieur Chevreul photographiés à la veille de sa cent et unième année* (Paris: Impr. Du Journal illustré, 1886); Chevreul, *Centenaire de M Chevreul. Discours prononcés au Museum d'Histoire Naturelle* (Paris: Gauthier-Villars, 1886); Chevreul, *Œuvres scientifiques de Michel-Eugène Chevreul, doyen des étudiants de France 1806-1886. Avec une introduction de M. J. Desnoyers et une préface de M. Charles Brongniart* (Paris: Gauthier-Villars, 1886).

20 See Robert L. Herbert, Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Galeries nationales du Grand Palais, *Georges Seurat, 1859-1891* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1991); William Innes Homer, *Seurat and the Science of Painting* (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1964); Martin Kemp, *The Science of Art: Optical Themes in Western Art from Brunelleschi to Seurat* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); Michael Zimmerman, *Seurat and the Art Theory of His Time* (Antwerp: Fonds Mercator, 1991).

21 For discussions of the political implications of Courbet's subject matter, see T.J. Clark, *Image of the People: Courbet and the 1848 Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973) and Linda Nochlin, *Realism* (New York: Penguin, 1971).

22 See T. J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1984).

23 For explanations and interpretations of Cézanne's innovations, see *Cézanne, the Late Work*, ed. William Rubin (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1977). For a history of the development of linear perspective in the Italian Renaissance, see Samuel Y. Edgerton, *The Renaissance Rediscovery of Linear Perspective* (New York: Basic Books, 1975).

24 See Anne Davenport's essay in this volume

25 Albert Gleizes, "Le Cubisme et la tradition," *Montjoie!* (February 10, 1913): 15-23.

26 Gleizes 15.

27 For an overview of the artistic activities of the Abbaye de Créteil, see Daniel Robbins, "From Symbolism to Cubism: The Abbaye de Créteil," *Art Journal*, vol. 23, no. 2 (Winter 1963-64): 111-116. For Gleizes's theory of art's relationship to religion, see William A. Dyrness, *Rouault: A Vision of Suffering and Salvation* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1971), 162, 212, 217. See especially his participation in the 1947 study on art and the sacred: Joseph Pichard et al., "Recherche du Sacré," *L'Art Sacré* 4-5 (April-May 1947).

28 Kevin D. Murphy, "Cubism and Collegiate Gothic: Raymond Duchamp-Villon at Connecticut College," *Archives of American Art Journal*, vol. 32, no. 1 (1992): 16-21.

29 Throughout nineteenth-century Europe, the Gothic Revival was tied to nationalism. France, England, and Germany all claimed that the Gothic was their indigenous tradition. Thus, the French avant-garde's claims to that style, including Rouault's, are inherently partisan and nationalistic. For an overview of the politics of the Gothic Revival, see Barry Bergdoll, "Nationalism and Stylistic Debates in Architecture," *European Architecture, 1750-1890* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2000).

30 Mark Antliff, "Cubism, Celtism, and the Body Politic," *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 74, no. 4 (Dec. 1992): 665-668.

31 It might be more than mere coincidence that an article on the art of military riding was published in the same journal issue as that on Chevreul's fiftieth anniversary cited in n. 18 above. See Commandant C. De Montergon, "Un Écuyer. Défense et illustration de l'art équestre," *Mémoires de la Société d'Agriculture Sciences et Arts d'Angers* 14/6 (1939): 28-43.

32 *Divertissement* 8.

The Mask of Villon: Neo-Medievalist Realism in Rouault's *Divertissement*

Anne A. Davenport

Pierre Courthion calls them the colors of Watteau,[1] and he is not wrong, but the tender pastels of Rouault's illustrated holograph poem *Divertissement* evoke Watteau's *Pierrot* only to trace Watteau's colors back to an earlier France of "beautiful, chaste stone" and anonymous craftsmen.[2] Published by Tériade in 1943, *Divertissement* emerged from a traumatically dark period in Rouault's life. The collapse of France before the Nazi invader had forced Rouault to flee South and find refuge in Golfe Juan. Vollard's heirs had barred Rouault from his studio, bolting the doors. Uprooted and dispossessed,[3] Rouault saw his own upheaval writ large in the suffering of his devastated country, suddenly stripped naked, like himself: "O my country, in these times of violence and wounds, I cherish you more than ever."[4]

Rouault's friend Tériade, also in exile in Golfe Juan, invited Rouault to compose a *livre d'artiste* in which text and image would be closely joined, emulating the lost unity of medieval art.[5] Rouault embraced the project as an opportunity to reflect on the medieval sources of his own artistic trajectory, indivisibly pictorial and poetic. As Jacques Maritain had pointed out as early as 1910,[6] Rouault viewed himself as the spiritual heir of medieval artisans and especially of the medieval *verriers* whose "frail and devout hands" knew the secret of producing "mute and fiery reds, gold yellows and antique blues."[7] Apprenticed in his youth to a stained-glass maker, Rouault had symbolically "cut his hands" on the material panes while dreaming of accomplishing, like his medieval predecessors, bold flat works with "colors as pure as flames," instead of the dull neo-classical designs that were asked of him.[8]

For Tériade's first and deliberately neo-medievalist *livre d'artiste*, Rouault picked the familiar theme of the Circus and the Pascalian title of *Divertissement*, suggesting a meditation on the vain human impulse to escape misery.[9] He also picked medieval roots for himself along with the wry, bittersweet verse of the fifteenth-century rogue poet François Villon.[10] At once a personal testament and a public testimony, Rouault's *Divertissement* starts with a self-portrait:

> Child of Panam[11]
> —poignant village
> never quitted since my birth
> so long ago.[12]
> Baptized was I at Saint Leu

Villon's own parish, they say,
Belatedly dunked.[13]

Rouault's neighborhood was in ashes after his birth on the penultimate day of the Commune (May 27, 1871). He was not able to be baptized until June 25, 1871, at the church of Saint Leu, in the heart of ancient Paris, close to the bustling and pungent market of Les Halles. Given the anxiety that Catholics had at the time, usually baptizing the infant as soon as possible after birth (for fear of an infant's death without baptism), Rouault's being "belatedly dunked" was highly unusual and points to the ongoing state of destruction in Belleville following the Commune's fall.[14] Rouault pursues:

But born, to be sure, on the heights of
Belleville
during black, hard times
poor little brat, paling and suffering
in the dark cellar of rue Greneta[15]

Like Montmartre, Belleville, on the right bank of the Seine, to the northeast, is built on a hillside and "looks down" on Paris—on its churches and monuments, on the silvery loop of the river cradling Notre Dame. At once higher up (physically and spiritually) and lower down (socially and economically), Belleville is the Paris that *bourgeois* Paris rarely visits. By evoking the "heights" of Belleville together with the dark basement of his birth, Rouault paints a mythical place of human tenacity where wretchedness is faced openly, like a mark of election. Villon, too, glorified in his obscure and wretched birth: *povre suis de ma jeunesse, de povre et de petite extrace.*[16]

As early as 1924, the art critic Waldemar George, one of Rouault's most fervent supporters, had compared the painter to Villon. George, perhaps acting on Rouault's own suggestion, wrote that "the soul of the great French poet, mystic and bawdy at the same time," had taken up residence in "Rouault, this Saint of painting, the only Catholic painter produced by our epoch, the only, whose essentially modern work takes on the aspect of a genuine Passion."[17] By 1940, the *persona* (mask) of Villon had become for Rouault a means of psychic survival. The project of *diverting* himself from personal suffering by adopting Villon's voice and handcrafting, *Divertissement* inspired Rouault not only to take on Villon's grit, but also Villon's defiance.

Was *Maistre* Villon not, above all, a master at gaming the system?[18] Cunningly *diverting* the attention of Vichy censors, Rouault's *Divertissement* appears to promote a frivolous escapism:

But stop speaking about yourself,
Bellevillois!
Or you will stick your pitch-black filth to
your work.
Allow me, then, Byzantines, to take my
leave. Miousic! Miousic!
In all Kingdoms, Empires, Republics
Especially during dark, sad or tragic times,
Miousic! Miousic![19]

A closer reading reveals, however, that the aim of *Divertissement* is far more politically *engagé* than first appears. Invoking his own departure from rigidly classical preconceptions,[20] Rouault affirms his own "musical" approach to art as a choice for the "narrow Door" of a higher Realism and a higher faith.[21] Now, Rouault's freedom inspires a new palette of lyrical colors to lift not only his own spirits but also the spirits of his compatriots "in these dark times." *Divertissement* is, in effect, a covert manifesto aimed at condemning the selfish escapism of a collaborationist bourgeoisie while celebrating the heroic tenacity of the *petit peuple* of Belleville, whom "hardships have never prevented from singing."[22] Later in the poem, Rouault indeed explicitly denounces Bourgeois prudence, embodied by "Madame X," as a form of self-deception that does not know itself. To the suggestion made by "Madame Y" that times of crisis require fortitude rather than incessant worry, Madame X stiffly responds by citing her husband's superior wisdom:

"The situation requires careful thought"
or so my dear husband would say
who is no fool
who always sleeps with one eye open
So many worries he tells me, highly vexed,

to conserve the slightest wealth
so many efforts to acquire it.[23]

Madame Y responds by commenting sadly that the poor, who have nothing, often appear less troubled than the rich who worry about their possessions. Unlike Madame X, the poor remain joyful and are "a pleasure to see and to hear." Alas, the X's have gained a big following over the years, since few such happy souls (*bienheureux*) remain. Offering a more ancient wisdom, Madame Y explains:

The road is long,
you might say, it climbs
and descends and climbs again
If inside of us
We never have peace
are always anxious
with minds turning in a vicious circle
we will perish.[24]

Divertissement thus rejects the false realism of bourgeois calculation and salutes instead the *belle et bonne humeur*[25] that working-class wretches have always managed to muster in the face of oppression. Rouault's self-depiction as Villon *redivivus* is coupled with a self-portrait as *Gentil-Bernard*, broadening the lineage of Parisian drinking companions and of "musical" Realism by evoking Voltaire's *protégé* and member of the Paris group of rascal *chansonniers* known as the *société du Caveau*. In contrast to the very Watteau-esque *Pierrot as Aristocrat* of the same year, *Gentil-Bernard* appears shattered and somber, violently exiled, like Villon, from Paris—his high spirits at sudden risk:

Gentil Bernard
How very somber you are
Even as you sit down to eat
You who are usually such a joyous
companion
Is your house on fire? Is Paris no longer
your hometown?[26]

Gentil Bernard, moreover, is dressed, faintly, inconspicuously, halfheartedly, in red, white and blue (**no. 65j**). Faced with traumatic personal loss and collective tragedy, Rouault, like a true Bellevillois, summoned his resolve by turning to song as the only way to stem despair:

Song is all that is left to us
And in spirit to withdraw
to some oasis[27]

The key to grasping Rouault's *Divertissement* is that "oasis" veils its own meaning. Rouault appears to call for a hedonistic withdrawal but in fact surreptitiously calls for a collective return to the oasis of art and of Chartres—"haven of grace" where the oppressed are "greeted by angels."[28] Tempted at first to symbolize France through the elegance of Versailles (classicism, *rêverie*, refinement),[29] Rouault turned instead to Villon as paradigmatic of a more resourceful, combative, honest France, shaped by adversity and fraternity.[30] *Divertissement*, in effect, reclaims the figure of *Pierrot* from Watteau's shimmering *fêtes galantes* and returns it to the mordant *fêtes foraines* of medieval Paris, with "colors as pure as flames." The tragic sense of beauty that had colored Rouault's previous Circus sketches[31] is suspended in favor of a higher and distinctly French realism that confronts life's blows with a defiant serenity. The agony of Grünewald gives way to the lofty matter-of-factness of the Avignon Master. Expressionist colors and brushstrokes give way to the limpid tenacity of *l'École Française*.[32] Rather than personify a marginalized humanity, the *Pierrots* and dancers of *Divertissement* personify the invincible *audace* of Paris:

Good boys and truants
Let us do away with restrictions
With bad seasons of all kinds
Hoping for better ones.[33]

By internalizing Villon's "truancy" to confront despair, Rouault tacitly politicized his *livre d'artiste* and turned his private grief into a cry for solidarity—the same cry that is heard in Villon's appeal, as he faced the gibbet: "Brother humans, who live on after us, do not harden your hearts against us."[34] As recent scholarship has shown, neo-medievalism was not exclusively invoked by

the reactionary supporters of Vichy but was also invoked to organize the Resistance and return France to democracy.[35]

Hardship "never stops" a *Bellevillois* from singing! Pascal's negative valuation of *divertissement* applies only to conquerors, oppressors, who seek to escape the hell of their finitude, doomed, by God's grace, to fail:

> De profundis
> There the most powerful kings
> And all conquerors
> Without courtiers
> Without even fools
> to make them forget
> the misery of being so naked
> so bereft of everything.[36]

In contrast to the oppressors, who make their own hell on earth by seeking to escape the common human condition, the poor and the forgotten turn their wretchedness into spiritual sustenance, as though embracing a gift. Rouault commemorates the luminous gallantry of circus stars, grasped spontaneously by children as the spiritual root of the oasis that is art:

> Acrobats and lady riders
> Glittery or burnished fools
> Tight-rope dancers and storytellers
> My friends
> Color and harmony
> Since my earliest youth
> I have been in love with you
> Far from certain academies
> Without being overly stubborn
> Miousic?
> Let us for a moment forget sad times
> Rain and wind
> By seeing you once more, dazzling in the light.[37]

For the famished urchins of working-class Paris, the neighborhood circus was nothing less than an angelic visitation—not a futile *cache-misère* but a very real *trompe-faim*, a brief clearing of real sunshine, uplifting bruised hearts and eyes to heaven: "When the spectacle changes, little children who were crying suddenly smile at you."[38]

Like Villon, Rouault knew that nothing lasts, art fashions, ideas, cultural movements. Only joy is absolutely precious because it is threatened forever by new misery:

> Fauves, fauvicules and fauvettes[39]
> Cubes and Overcubes
> Where are the snows of yesteryear?[40] Good people
> Everything passes, breaks up and weighs down on us
> From East to West
> Nothing is ever new under the sun—[41]

In the face of injustice and terror, clowns and horseback riders make children laugh and teach them to defy gravity. They transmit the essential spiritual lesson, which is that we are all children of light, created to soar beyond the material realm. And while the motif of a necessary physical crutch, a red balancing rod, had taken a new importance in Rouault's painting after 1931,[42] now "Here is Boum-boum, maintaining himself without a balancing-rod on the tight-rope."[43] Gone is Boum-boum's balancing-rod, with its multiple evocations of self-protection but also of bearing life's cross, perhaps with some sort of *red* help.[44] Boum-boum, it seems, is now infused with a sort of immediate grace and (like the people of Paris) has all that he needs in himself to teach lessons in equilibrium to "the proudest esthetes of a monopolistic Tradition."[45] Lessons in valor—in defying gravity—are not learned in official academies but from the circus artist who shows us how to

> fly with his very own wings
> from the gold sand of the ring
> to the flying trapeze.[46]

Who, better than Villon, taught his spiritual children to "fly the coop" in order to survive and emerge again? Condensing Paris history into a cruel and inescapable *hinc et nunc* of tribulation, Rouault apologizes to "Master Villon" for the pre-

sumption of filling his shoes, implicitly making Villon his sole mentor and judge:

> Master François Villon
> Tell me
> why don't you, truant boy (mauvais garçon)
> If these are poems
> I want to be hanged
> Some call me literary
> I'm far from it, good mother.[47]

Rouault implies that his poems cannot possibly count as poems in Villon's eyes (or "I'll be darned") but also wryly asks to be hanged if by miracle they do, since apparently true poets reach new heights when facing the gibbet![48]

As though the new war, even more ghastly than the two preceding wars (i.e. the Paris Commune and the Great War), had taken over Rouault's self-appointed task of unveiling the grotesque character of modern progress, Rouault is now free to express the other side of his Realism, which is to celebrate, like Villon, the inexhaustible joyfulness of the poor. In the innocent smiles elicited by circus acts in wretched mothers and stunted children, Rouault recognized a forgotten France that is "overly self-effaced, modest, silent and hard-working."[49] Putting aside a sort of accusatory violence, Rouault's *livre d'artiste* adopts the fresh colors of fifteenth-century French miniatures, reminiscent of Jean Fouquet's Passion cycle, which is set in Paris, with corpses hanging matter-of-factly from delicate spring trees and artisans hard at work in the foreground, their backs turned to the supernatural drama that brings them redemption whether they know it or not.[50] In a similar vein, Rouault depicts his own artistic trajectory as both a bitterly poignant and ribald initiation through the Stations of the Cross.[51] The first station, significantly, is all inclusive and brilliantly multicolored, like the "mosaic of colors" that Rouault dreamed of producing in his youth, reviving the "oasis" of Chartres:

> Pagans or Christians
> Black, yellow and white
> Have we not seen every kind of abuse?[52]

Rouault defends human imagination (*la folle du logis*) as indispensable "in dark times" and as inherently spiritual (*Don Quixote mon ami*), but also warns of its danger:

> The crazy woman of the house
> Rebuked by so many
> We cherished her
> Out of fear of asphyxia
> In her company, we felt as light as a feather in the wind
> believing or at least supposing
> that we could freely escape.[53]

The temptation for artists, for all human beings, is to believe in our own autarchic means of evasion, untested by the sword of "sharp reality."[54] Only by acknowledging both the nobility as well as the ultimate impotence of unaided human imagination[55] does the artist learn to love what is Real. Instead of a chivalrous but chimeric freedom, he must direct his effort to the "comforting spectacle of the least bit of reality, when light caresses form."[56] By submitting his imagination to a higher Reality that alone creates and validates the slightest reality here and now, the artist paradoxically surpasses his own (secretly proud) despair and joins the mystical body of uplifted heart (*sursum corda*):

> Sursum Corda
> Black Pierrot, my son
> We must again and always
> sing matins[57]

Villon is a figure of defiance because he is, above all, a figure of fidelity. All at once irreverent, tender and mystical, Villon is a Realist by lineage, a believer by skepticism, and a *Fidelis* through fidelity to his own human nakedness. He is the son of the house, son of a great king, *enfant de la balle*. As *Divertissement* gathers momentum from an invisible and uninterrupted chorus of uplifted hearts, the vanished sounds of the Paris *marché* (open market)—the cries of fishmongers, of vendors of watercress—flood the poet's memory like immovable angels materializing out of exile. A graceful presence of swaying skirts (Madame

des Entourloupettes) tries to calm "snarling dogs" because she

> remembered
> full of joy
> A certain kind of past
> and the old customs and antiquated forms
> the picturesque cries
> of the antique city
> —"Come get tender, green, fountain
> watercress
> Six liards the bunch."[58]

She remembered so many street cries that reminded her of the happy days of her youth! That reminded her of her delicate complexion, her sharp white teeth, her girlish walk and, above all, of her

> mysterious smile
> which the Gioconda,[59] she was convinced
> would envy her
> if she came back to life.[60]

More lovely than the famous (Renaissance) smile of Mona Lisa, the smile of Rouault's watercress vendor, seen with the soul's eye, is the smile of the (medieval) angel of the Reims Cathedral. The angel's face was damaged by German bombing in September 1914, but the angelic joy survived, symbolizing to Rouault the very smile of France, which he preferred, "even mutilated," to the smile of Mona Lisa.[61]

Fused with Villon, Rouault manages to paint his own artistic narrative from a higher, collective, even patriotic, vantage point that helps him transcend the rejection he suffered at the hand of critics and even of friends:

> White Pierrot
> Be courteous
> Listen to me please
> For just a minute
> They do not want me —
> or Ile-de-France
> or profane art
> or supposedly religious art.[62]

All "they" really want is to rank artists and profit by all means imaginable, including theft.[63] Let unsympathetic critics and blind academics and venal merchants tell Pierrot "that he is black when he is white," true artists have always been wronged, abused and misjudged by their contemporaries.[64] Think of "poor dear Watteau," who was passed over by critics in favor of Boucher! Artists speak a language that is so difficult for the multitudes to understand, a language

> so beautiful, so tender, so valiant
> For the eyes, the soul, the heart
> Form, Color, Harmony
> A toungue that is stolen from the Gods
> at times very manly and pure
> at other times prostituted, vulgarized,
> degraded by conformists
> seeking the greatest profit.[65]

Evocative of the agonized solitude of the Garden of Olives, the "station" of *Divertissement* that vindicates "Black Pierrot" rejects the modern cult of honors and fame in this world:

> What a sad story
> White Pierrot Black Pierrot
> To degrade everything
> Without believing in anything
> Except in honors
> Or in the official recognition of the day
> What a sad story.[66]

Authentic artists seek neither fame nor riches but only to expose themselves without assurance to the Real in the hope of a fugitive vision:

> Art my Beloved
> we spend our lives
> adoring a Far-off God
> A jealous God
> without being either crazy or perverse
> without ever placing ourselves above the
> most destitute beggar
> naked in spirit
> If ever such grace is given
> Eurydice! Eurydice!

Moans Orpheus again and again
Seeing the fugitive form vanish.[67]

When the fugitive vision materializes, joy replaces despair. Out of the shimmering figure of Roussalka, the Mermaid, Rouault creates a radiantly enigmatic figure, encompassing opposites, at once alchemical and spiritual, aquatic and celestial, valiant and serene (**no. 65a**). Who is she? A homage to the composer Henri Duparc?[68] A homage to every artist's spiritual struggle and to the poet Pushkin? A figure of the *gratuity* of grace? Whoever she is, Rouault's Mermaid seems to hold the key to Rouault's surprising late-in-life pastels:

Roussalka
tender flesh —light pastel tone
Tea Rose
O my dove[69]

The motif of the dove is repeated twice, mysteriously combining the realm of water and the realm of ether. Is Rouault's mermaid a figure of the radiance of peace? Rouault earlier distinguished the "miserable peace that is a deadly slumber" from peace that gives life, peace that is a "tender and gentle spiritual ascent abolishing carnal and material fetters."[70] Is Roussalka the peace of the poor, bereft of possessions and of worries?

Roussalka
tender and shaded flesh
gently tinted by the slightest emotion
O my dove[71]

Pictorially, Roussalka's gold hair is crowned with a brilliant white halo—full moon, or sun, illuminating the azure sky. On the right of Roussalka is a red form, a curtain. In spite of her exotic name, Rouault's Roussalka is placed, in effect, against a billowing blue, white and red background, as though by accident.[72] She is a figure of Marianne, gazing inwardly, with the smile of Reims, Our Lady of Fraternity and Equality, Our lady of Lorraine enamoured of French Liberty, as beautiful as the swift sky of Ile-de-France:

Roussalka
tender and shaded flesh
gently tinted by the slightest emotion
O my dove
Life is a dream
And death don't you agree is murder
Or so it seems to me
In my Ile-de-France
As I think of you.[73]

At once a radiant mermaid that inhabits the deep waters of history and a resolute dove that protects France with her free wings, *Roussalka* is everything that the Nazi conqueror and the fascist traitor cannot destroy or possess in the French heart. Rouault—or is it Villon?—now cries out *de profundis* for all posterity to hear, that he is neither accursed nor attracted to ugliness but a lover of life:

And they say
these good people
that I am a painter of Death
in love with Darkness
With Deathly and Cold Night
I abhor it
I adore all that lives
Under the sky.[74]

Healing himself with colors "as pure as flames," Rouault looks back at the bravely faithful young artist he once was, *enfant de la balle* who joined the art world and was rejected (like Courbet), was demonized (like Manet), and was excommunicated (like Cézanne)[75]

Little Red and Gold Page
You are king, child of the shop (enfant de la balle)
Maybe a bit too melancholy
Which is why so many respected pundits
Find it in good taste to label you an anarchist.[76]

Like Villon's *Grand Testament*, which looks back on the poet's life with irony and regret, weaving together personal stories and historical

anecdotes, Rouault's *Divertissement* looks back at a life of private and public tribulations with bravado and gratitude, as to indispensable initiatory "stations" through which the Real became visible to the heart and miraculously accessible:

> Stamp and claw of reality
> Flavor and pulp of the fruit
> Subtle quality of matter
> when it is kept free from the straight-jacket
> of systems
> Life is beautiful
> Art the beloved is the oasis.[77]

Thus the oasis to which Rouault's oppressed compatriots must withdraw "in these dark times" is not an exotic land or even the physical haven of the Riviera but the spiritual haven of a modest, joyful France that always prevails, through thick and thin, and lives immovably, audaciously, in the artist's fidelity to the Real, "when light caresses form." Fidelity to *L'École Française* is a fidelity to color, form, and harmony—but, above all, a fidelity to the here and now, our only window of meaningful activity, our only dance.

Rouault completes the cycle of *Divertissement* with "a last Harlequinery" that seeks to emphasize his own resilient Realism and transmit it to a demoralized country. No longer a little Page of Red and Gold, the mature poet-artist is now fully *culotté,* capable of negativity, thanks to the tides and contrary winds of life, but also capable of transcending negativity when times demand it.[78] Thanks to Villon, Rouault faces the new war and the absurd return of death with a morbid, wry humor that allows an immensely generative hope. Dressed in Gold and Black, mordant and agile, bitter and urgent, Harlequin is death come back, eternally, artful and true, charged mystically with waking up the quick and the dead to lead them in a supreme *danse macabre* (**no. 65g**):

> Harlequin
> in the last harlequinery that closes the cycle
> of a delirious circus
> I like to see you one last time
> and picture you again in my imagination
> Gold-yellow and ivory-black
> with the sting of a lustful wasp
> waking the quick and the dead
> in these sad times
> for a supreme dance of death.[79]

Who will face the last "harlequinery," the inescapable promiscuity and joyful fraternity of a macabre circus that no one escapes and that ends in death, with freedom and equality for all? Mysteriously, the figure of Charlie Chaplin, *Charlot* to French children, earlier depicted in "his little garret," despondent and yawning, trying to devour his own shoes,[80] has come out of the woodwork and down into the street:

> Charlot
> leads the ball
> hesitant undertaker of evening
> turning flame red
> in an instant.[81]

By evoking the levelling power of death and the vanished medieval motif of the *Danse macabre* with its associated grief for the *Saints Innocents*, Rouault calls on his compatriots to put their differences aside and join hands with new rogues, with new clowns, to mobilize against foreign occupation in a vast Parisian wave of defiant hope. Gold and "ivory" black, the colors of Notre-Dame in mourning and in glory, now mark the poet-artist (the tumbler, the clown) as an indispensable dissident (half-anarchist, half-*Communard)* who must come back from despair to awaken France here and now to sing matines.

Did Rouault's *Divertissement* succeed?[82] As Jacques Maritain perceived early in Rouault's career,[83] and as Rouault's younger colleague and friend Alfred Manessier understood,[84] the kind of neo-medievalism that is found in Rouault's work and most especially in *Divertissement* is not a nostalgic antiquarianism nor even a mere tribute. By becoming Villon, by handcrafting *Divertissement*, Rouault vividly summoned artists to "be here now"—to be immediately present to the real world, the living world, in all of its savagery and distress. Artists must forego the temptation to

cling to "classical" pictorial forms in order to rejuvenate authentic spiritual art and keep genuine classicism, which cannot be divorced from Realism, alive.[85] Rouault grasped that medieval miniatures and stained-glass windows transmit, as Jacques Maritain put it, their own irrevocable vocation to live "a most immediate reality."[86]

What is meant by "a most immediate reality?" The answer, I think, is that mortality, in medieval art, is not denied but put at the center of the artist's vision. Mortality, as modern phenomenologists remind us, is paradoxical.[87] Villon, like Rutebeuf, like the *verriers* of Chartres and the stone masons of Reims, chose Realism over Naturalism precisely because death is *real* but is not *natural* in the least. The paradox of *my death*—the death that is real, the death that matters—cannot ever be "part" of a naturalist perspective and is therefore inescapably absent from Renaissance and neo-classical art. *My death* has hollow stone eyes and calls out to God to Absolve us All.[88] Medieval art of the Realist tradition neither fights nor occults human finitude. It places human finitude at the heart of human misery and at the heart of human hope.[89] This is why medieval art strikes us as so pure—why it so powerfully urges the living to love "all that is alive under the sky." The paradox of Rouault's *Divertissement* is precisely its power to bring the living face to face with mortality by renouncing an escapist modern paradigm. The neo-medievalist Realism of *Divertissement* offers a new kind of modernism, in which we can hope, once again, to be loved.[90] By the same token, in Rouault's hands, the face of Veronica and the face of Christ become living faces among the living—eternal witnesses, *hic et nunc*, of human destitution. Rouault's spiritual heirs, most especially his fellow Catholic converts like Alfred Manessier, Elvire Jan and Leon Zach, internalized Rouault's neo-medievalist vocation for the infinite "now" of living souls. There is, in effect, no *divertissement* in *Divertissement*, except Villon's mask, used to trick Vichy officials.

Endnotes

1 Pierre Courthion, *Georges Rouault* (New York: Abrahms, 1962) 292.

2 See G. Rouault, "Visage de la France," in Tériade's Art Review *Verve*, No. 8, Paris, 1940; reprinted in G. Rouault, *Sur l'art et sur la vie* (Paris: Denoel, 1971) 122.

3 See Rouault's letter to Raissa Maritain of mid-April 1946, p. 2: "If you want to have an idea of my present situation, picture a Benedictine, responsible for a variety of works to be produced, transported right and left, from 1939 to 1946, with nothing but bits and pieces of documents, forced at every moment to miss what he used to have readily available." Maritain Archives. (I thank Bernard Doering for making this letter available.)

4 "Soliloques," *Sur l'art et sur la vie* 14.

5 Casimir Di Crescenzo, in *Tériade éditeur: centenaire 1897-1997* (Paris: Bouquinerie de L'Institut, 1997), cites Tériade (unnumbered page): "If I have insisted on producing Artists' Books with the immediate collaboration of artists, it is our of love for XVth century manuscripts, illuminations and miniatures. In that era, texts and images were most often conceived by the same hand."

6 See Stephen Schloesser's account in *Jazz Age Catholicism: Mystic Modernism in Postwar Paris, 1919-1933* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 2005) 220-222.

7 "Visage de la France," *Verve*, no. 8, 1940; reprinted in *Sur l'art et sur la vie*, 122.

8 "Soliloques," *Sur l'art et sur la vie* 16.

9 For Pascal, even kings seek constantly (but in vain) to distract themselves, proving both the misery (finitude and lack) and grandeur (thirst for infinite happiness) of our humanity. "See Blaise Pascal, "Divertissement" *Pensées, Oeuvres Complètes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1954) 1138-48. Note, in particular, p. 1145: "All great distractions are dangerous for Christian life."

10 The poet Blaise Cendrars, whom Rouault may have known through the Delauneys, contributed to a new edition of Villon's poetry (Paris: La Sirène, 1918), illustrated with fifteenth-century wood engravings. Villon (b. 1431) lived most of his youth in Paris, near the rue St. Jacques, and repeatedly fell afoul of the law. His finest poem is "The Ballad of the Hanged Men" and his masterwork is "The Great Testament." Unlike his contemporary Charles d'Orleans, Villon wrote in the Realist tradition of Rutebeuf.

11 Paris, in Parisian slang. Cf. Leo Ferré's song, "Paname."

12 *Divertissement* 7: "Enfant de Panam/ —village émouvant/jamais quitté—Depuis que je suis né/ un bien

long temps." Rouault's Paris neighborhood, Belleville, was still a village in 1871 when he was born.

13 *Divertissement* 7: "Baptisé à Saint Leu/ Paroisse de Villon dit-on/Tardivement ondoyé."

14 During the Commune the pastor of Saint Leu had been arrested and bombs had exploded inside the church even though it was locked up. See Stephen Schloesser's essay in the present volume.

15 *Divertissement* 7: "Mais né aux hauteurs/ de Belleville/ en temps noirs et difficiles/ Pauvre petit marmot—pâtissant, pâlissant/ en la soupente noire/ de la rue Greneta." Note that a very similar self-depiction was published in *Verve*, no. 4 (January-March 1939): 140.

16 Françoys Villon, "Grand Testament." ("Poor am I from youth, of poor and lowly extraction.")

17 Waldemar George, "Un Grand peintre romantique français: Georges Rouault," *La Revue Mondiale* (September 1, 1924): 78-82; Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism*, 239-240.

18 Exiled from Paris in 1456 after stabbing a priest to death, Villon managed to secure the protection, in Blois, of Charles d'Orleans, before being again arrested and thrown into a dungeon. Freed, then imprisoned once again in Paris in 1461 and condemned to death, he managed to get the sentence lifted in 1463.

19 *Divertissement* 8: "Cesse de parler de toi/ bellevillois/ ou tu ficheras la poisse/ à tes ouvrages/ Permettez-moi donc byzantins/ que je vous quitte/ Miousic!/ Miousic!/ En toutes Royautés Empires/ Républiques/ Surtout en des temps noirs/ tristes ou tragiques/ Miousic! Miousic!.

20 See *Divertissement* 55-56, where "Byzantines" are described as "classical before birth" and as "asleep on their pillows of golden misery, sure of themselves, their eyes closed with regard to all incorrect movement, having engraved in a powerful acid an invincible program on their brains."

21 See *Divertissement* 56: "Forme couleur harmonie/ Trois portes étroites/ sur lesquelles est inscrit/ Hardi petit/ Il faut laisser ici toute Espérence."

22 "Soliloques," *Sur l'art et sur la vie* 16.

23 *Divertissement* 43-44: "À l'encontre pensons-y/ dirait mon cher mari/ homme averti/ qui ne dort que d'un oeil/ Tant de soucis dit-il marri/ pour conserver quelque bien/ tant d'efforts pour l'acquérir." I thank Stephen Schloesser for pointing out that Rouault identified Monsieur X, Madame X's counterpart, with Monsieur Homais, whom Thomas Epstein (in the present volume) calls "Flaubert's notoriously vulgar-demotic pharmacist" in *Madame Bovary*. In a letter to Pierre Matisse, Rouault wrote: "Si 'Monsieur X' parlait il vous dirait qui il est—Monsieur Homais peut-être bien, et s'il a pose pour moi, à quelle date et quel lieu: Berlin, Paris ou Rome?" See letter of Rouault to Pierre Matisse quoted in *Georges Rouault, Exposition du Centenaire* (Paris: Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1971) 49.

24 *Divertissement*, 44 and 47: "La route est longue/ direz-vous, elle monte/ redescend et puis monte encore/ si au dedans/ n'avons jamais la paix/ toujours inquiets/ l'esprit tournant/ en un cercle vicieux/ nous périrons." Rouault may have known the famous metaphor from the medieval epic, *La chanson de Roland*, translated by Joseph Bédier and published in Paris in 1931: "High are the mountains and the valleys are deep" ("Alt sunt li mons et li vals tenebros").

25 "Soliloques," *Sur l' art et sur la vie* 14: "beautiful high spirits."

26 *Divertissement* 14: "Gentil Bernard/ Comme te voila grave/—même en te mettant/ à table/ Toi si souvent gai compagnon/ le feu est-il à ta maison/ Et Paris serait-il plus ton village?"

27 *Divertissement* 8: "Il n'est que de chanter/ Et en esprit se retirer/ Vers quelque oasis." The art critic René Huyghe wrote, in *Les Contemporains* (Paris: P. Tisné, 1949) 108: "As early as 1941, French painting, under the occupation, responded to the invader by rallying its forces of audacity."

28 See Rouault's poem "L'oasis," written in August-September 1939, at Chartres; reprinted in *Sur l'art et sur la vie*, 166. And *Divertissement* 75: "L'art bien aimé, l'oasis."

29 See P. Courthion, *Versailles (the Terrace)* (ca. 1940), *Pierrot as Aristocrat* (1941) and *Blue Pierrots* (ca. 1943), in *Georges Rouault* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978) 126, 128 and 134, respectively.

30 A premonition of this alternation is found in Rouault's "En marge des doctrines," *Nouvelle Revue Francaise* no. 217, 1 October 1931, 607: "As for myself, who am from Ile de France, I'm quite aware that Versailles is not the only capital and that one can get to Paris by passing through Chartres and Reims."

31 See, e.g., the analysis by the Dominican theologian and scholar A.-M. Cocagnac in *L'Art sacré*, nos. 5-6, (January-February 1964), especially pp. 9-10 and 12-14. For a useful introduction to the Dominican Journal *L'Art sacré*, see Aidan Nichols OP, "The Dominicans and the Journal *L'Art sacré*," *New Blackfriars*, vol. 88, no. 1013 (January 2007): 25-45.

32 See Rouault, "Visage de la France," reprinted in *Sur l'art et sur la vie,* 123: "Loin des conquêtes terrestres me sera-t-il permis de contempler encore (sans perdre de vue pour cela le Greco, Rembrandt ou Grünewald) la *Déposition de Croix* d'Avignon, le *Sourire* de Reims—que j'ai la faiblesse de préférer à la Joconde -, le petit *Benedicite* de Chardin [...] tant d'autres oeuvres de "Ecole Française, si diverse."

33 *Divertissement* 13: "Bons ou mauvais garçons Oublions les restrictions/ Toutes mauvaises saisons/ En espérant de très belles."

34 François Villon, "La Ballade des pendus": "Frères humains, qui après nous vivez, n'ayez les coeurs contre nous endurcis."

35 See, in particular, Roy Rosenstein, "A Medieval Troubadour in the French Resistance," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 59, No. 3. (Jul. 1998): 499-520.

36 See *Divertissement* 64: "*De profundis*/ Là les plus puissants rois/ Et tous les conquérants/ sans courtisans/Pas même leurs fous/ pour leur faire oublier/ misère d'être nus/ et dépouillés de tout."

37 *Divertissement* 11: "Acrobates et écuyères/ Pitres reluisants ou flapis/ Equilibristes ou fantaisistes/ mes amis/ Couleur et harmonie/ Depuis ma plus tendre enfance/ De vous je me suis épris/ Loin de certaines académies/ Sans trop de parti—pris/ Miosuic? Oublions un instant trsistes temps/ pluie ou vent/ En vous revoyant/ si reluisants/ dans la lumière." Already in Rouault's poem *Cirque de l'Étoile filante* (1938), a sense of the spunky courage of the *enfants de la balle* is present. *Divertissement* thus simply privileges and magnifies a latent viewpoint.

38 *Divertissement* 11: "Quand le spectacle varie/ Les petits enfants qui pleuraient/ Tout à coup vous sourient."

39 Rouault is punning with labels of artistic movements ("Fauves"). "Fauvettes" are sparrows.

40 "Mais où sont les neiges d'antan?" Rouault is citing Villon verbatim, from the poem "Ballade des dames du temps jadis."

41 *Divertissement* 15: "Fauves fauvicules et fauvettes/ Cubes surcubes/ Où sont les neiges d'antan? Bonnes gens/ Tout passe casse et se lasse/ d'Orient n Occident/ Rien n'est nouveau sous le soleil/ Hiver, printemps, été, automne."

42 See Schloesser's introductory essay in present volume.

43 *Divertissement* 13: "Voici Boum—Boum/ Se maintenant sans balancier/ sur le fil d'acier."

44 *Divertissement* hints at Rouault's ambivalent feelings towards the Communist *Partisans* as (1) preferable by far to *bourgeois* individualists but as (2) usurping the freer, Villonesque character of working-class culture by replacing the hardship of a real religious faith with empty promises of progress and happiness. See *Divertissement* 14: "Effrontés partisans/ promettent le bonheur/ à tous passants/ autrefois gais bateleurs/ en tous carrefours nous faisaient la vie plus lègère/ pour un quart d'heure."

45 *Divertissement* 13: "Aux plus fiers esthètes/ de la Tradition monopole/ Sans avoir l'air d'y penser/ Donnant leçon d'équilibre."

46 *Divertissement* 13.

47 *Divertissement* 12: "Maitre François Villon/ Ditesmoi donc mauvais garçon/ Si ce sont poèmes/ Je veux être pendu/ Certains m'affirment littéraire/ J'en suis loin bonne mère.'

48 Villon's most famous poem, "La Ballade des pendus," written from prison while sentenced to hang, is universally acknowledged to be not only Villon's best poem but one of the most powerful poems of the French language.

49 See "Visage de la France," reprinted in *Sur l'art et sur la vie*, 124.

50 See, for example, Jean Fouquet's "Heures d'Etienne Chevalier," published by Tériade in 1942, with a text by Henri Malo.

51 *Divertissement* 5: "Before dying, I will, in thought, perform the different stations through which we have passed."

52 i.e., in French, "Have we not seen every kind of color?" *Divertissement* 19: "Paiens ou chrétiens/ Noirs jaunes et blancs/ En avons nous vu/ de toutes les couleurs"

53 *Divertissement* 20: "La folle du logis/ Tant décriée par certains/ nous l'avons chérie/ crainte d'asphyxie/ Nous nous sentions légers/ comme plume au vent/ en sa compagnie/ croyant ou supposant/ nous évader/ à gratuité." Is there a connection to Jean Giradoux's *la Folle de Chaillot*, written the same year and involving similar themes of popular resistance? The expression "la folle du logis" meaning "human imagination" is idiomatic and goes back at least as far as Pascal.

54 *Divertissement* 19: "réalités tranchantes comme le fil de l'épée."

55 "Don Quixote our friend died in his bed" (*Divertissement* 19). Compare with *Cirque de l'Étoile filante* (1938), in *Sur l'art et sur la vie*, 157: "In these sad and grey times,/ Don Quixote of the Mancha,/ Far from this brood that thinks of itself as progressive/ Adorable dear nutcake (*fou*), help us."

56 "Soliloques," *Sur l'art et sur la vie* 18: "Doux spectacle de la moindre réalité, quand la lumière caresse la forme!"

57 *Divertissement* 20: "*Sursum corda.* Pierrot noir mon fils/ il faut encore et toujours/chanter matines." In the pre-Vatican II Latin mass, the priest issued this invitation to the congregation—"*Sursum corda*" ("Lift up your hearts")—and the congregation responded—"*Habemus ad Dominum* ("We have lifted them to the Lord".)

58 *Divertissement* 22: "Elle se souvenait/ De certain passé/ et de formes usagées/ démodées/ avec allégresse/ des cris pittoresques/ de l'ancienne cité—à la tendresse/ la verdurette/ —"Cresson de fontaine/ a six liards de la botte."

59 Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*.

60 *Divertissement* 25: "Mystérieux sourire/ que la Joconde à son dire si elle était ressuscitée/ lui eût envié."

61 "Visage de la France," *Verve*, 1940; reprinted in *Sur l'art et sur la vie*, 123: "le *Sourire de Reims*—que j'ai la faiblesse de préférer, même mutilé, à celui de la Joconde."

62 *Divertissement* 26: "Pierrot blanc/ Sois discret écoute moi donc/ un instant/ Ils ne me veulent point—/ d'Ile de France/ ou d'art profane ou prétendu/ sacré.

63 *Divertissement* 26: "Just think of that charming "Indifférent"/ How it was stolen, fixed-up, falsified/ By a pedantic idiot." ("Pense a ce charmant 'Indifférent'/ Volé, restauré, truqué/ Par un ignorant pédant.") In June 1939, Watteau's painting *L'indifférent* was stolen from the Louvre, as was *Mona Lisa* in 1911. See http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,931325,00.html

64 See, in particular, Leon Bloy's rejection, recounted by Schloesser in *Jazz Age Catholicism*, 218.

65 *Divertissement* 29: "Peut-être parlez-vous une langue/ assez difficile à comprendre/ bien qu'ils pensent/ ou affirment/ une langue muette/ Si belle, si tendre, si vaillante/ Pour les yeux, l'esprit, le coeur/ Forme, Couleur, Harmonie/ Une langue aux Dieux ravie/ Parfois très virile et pure/ ou prostituée vulgarisée rabaissée/ par des conformistes intéressés/ à en tirer meilleur profit."

66 *Divertissement* 30: "La triste histoire/ Pierrot Blanc Pierrot noir/ De tout rabaisser/ sans rien croire/ Sinon aux honneurs/ ou aux consécrations du moment/ la triste histoire.

67 *Divertissement* 59: "Art bien aimé/ on passe sa vie à adorer/ un Dieu lointain/ un Dieu jaloux/ sans être fou ni pervers/ sans se croire au dessus/ dun plus pauvre hère en esprit dépouillé/ si cette grâce nous est accordée/ Eurydice! Eurydice!/ redit Oprhée plaintif/ voyant s'évanouir/ la forme fugitive." Cf. Villon, "Double ballade sur le même propos": "Orpheus le doux menestrier/ Jouant de flustes et musettes".

68 Henri Duparc (1848-1933), following a religious conversion, destroyed his own opera *Roussalka*, based on Pushkin's poem. Only a fragment survived, with the title "*Au pays ou on se fait la guerre*" ("In the country where war is waged.") Duparc shared Rouault's love of Baudelaire as well as his indifference for worldly honors. Duparc was buried at *Père Lachaise*, in Belleville. I thank Anne Bernard Kearney for calling my attention to this possible reference. Rouault's interest in the alchemical "unity of opposites" is perhaps also expressed in the figure "Rock Crystal" in the *Réincarnations du Père Ubu*. See Stephen Schloesser's essay in the present volume.

69 *Divertissement* 63: "La Roussalka/ chair tendre - ton pastel léger/ Rose thé/ O ma colombe"

70 See *Divertissement* 47, following the passage that opposes calls for inner peace rather than anxiety to confront "these dark times": "Je ne parle pas de cette paix misérable/ en tel sommeil mortel/ mais d'une douce et tendre ascension spirituelle/ abolissant tant de liens divers—charnels et matériels."

71 *Divertissement* 67-68: "La Roussalka/ Chair tendre et ombrée/ à la moindre émotion doucement colorée/ O ma colombe."

72 For official censorship of painterly allusions to the *tricolore* in 1942, see Michèle Cone, "'Abstract' Art as a veil: Tricolore painting in Vichy France, 1940-1944," *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. LXXIV, No. 2 (June 1992): 203.

73 *Divertissement* 68: "O ma colombe/ La vie est un songe/ Et la mort dis moi/ Un assassinat/ pour le moins il me semble/ en mon Ile de France/ en pensant à toi.

74 *Divertissement* 64: "Et ils me disent/ Ces bonnes gens/ Peintre de la Mort/ Amoureux des Ténèbres/ Nuit froide et mortelle/ J'en ai horreur/ Et j'adore tout ce qui vit/ sous le ciel."

75 *Divertissement* 33: Long ago/ In the great Elyseans *salons*/ which I still had a chance to know/ Courbet once ago rejected/, Manet contested/, Cezanne excommunicated.

76 *Divertissement* 33: "Petit page rouge et or/ Tu es roi enfant de la balle/ peut-être un peu mélancolique/ ce qui a procuré l'occasion à tant d'augures de bon ton de te dire anarchiste."

77 *Divertissement* 75: "Sceau et griffe de la réalité/ saveur et pulpe du fruit/qualité subtile de la matière/ hors la camisole de force/ des systèmes/ La vie est belle/ l'art bien aimé l'oasis."

78 French slang for "bold" meaning, literally "with pants on." See *Divertissement* 37: "cullotté par vents et marées contraires devient négateur."

79 *Divertissement* 75-76; "Arlequin/ en cette dernière arlequinade/ qui termine ce cycle/ d'un cirque délirant/ j'aime te voir une dernière fois/ et revoir en imagination/ jaune à l'or et noir d'ivoire/ piquant comme le dard/ d'une guêpe lubrique/ reveillant vivants et morts/ en ces temps tristes/ par une danse macabre/ de haut bord."

80 *Divertissement* 74: "Le nez au vent/ Dans sa petite mansarde/ Charlot me regarde- / se prélassant/ mélancoliquement/ gris, terne, et baillant/ dévorant ses souliers/ comme hors d'oeuvre."

81 *Divertissement* 76: "Charlot/ conduit le bal/ croquemort louvoyant/ de soir/ passant au rouge flamboyant/ en un instant."

82 My interpretation of *Divertissement* concurs with René Huyghe's assessment in *Les Contemporains* (Paris: P. Tisné, 1949) 108. For recent discussions of the political context, see Michèle C. Cone, "'Abstract'

Art as a Veil: Tricolor painting in Vichy France, 1940-44," 191-204; and Natalie Adamson, "Against the Amnesiacs: The Art Criticism of Jean Bazaine, 1934-1944," *French History and Civilization: Papers from the George Rudé Seminar*, vol. 1, eds. Ian Coller, Helen Davies and Julie Kalman (2005): 114-127.

83 See "Druet Préface," 1910, cited by Schloesser in *Jazz Age Catholicism*, 221 and fns. 28, 29.

84 See Manessier's interview on Sacred Art in *L'Art religieux actuel*, 1948.

85 I am paraphrasing Alfred Manessier in *L'Art religieux actuel*, 1948. See also Manessier's "Hommage to Rouault," delivered at Rouault's 80th birthday celebration, June 6, 1951, at the Palais de Chaillot: "You are a guide to us in our lives and in our work because you have shown us that a true Christian and a true painter must rely only the language of their vocation to fight and to win."

86 Jacques Favelle (pseudonym of Jacques Maritain), catalogue for *L'Exposition de peintures et céramiques de G. Rouault* (Paris: Galerie E. Druet, 1910. Reprinted in *Rouault. Première Période 1903-1920*, ed. Fabrice Hergott (Paris: Éditions du Centre Georges Pompidou, 1992) 200-201.

87 See, most prominently, Jean-Luc Marion, *In Excess: Studies of Saturated Phenomena*, translated by Robyn Horner and Vincent Berraud (New York: Fordham Univ. Press, 2002).

88 Citing Villon, "La ballade des pendus."

89 For a different interpretation, see Schloesser, *Catholicism in the Jazz Age* 221.

90 See, further, Jean-Luc Marion, *The Erotic Phenomenon*, trans. Stephen E. Lewis (Chicago: Chicago Univ. Press, 2007).

"Pilgrim of art": Artistic Autonomy and Christian Commitment in Rouault's Late Work[1]

Stephan Dahme

In his preface to Georges Rouault's *Miserere* (1948), the French priest and arts connoisseur Abbé Maurice Morel posed this rhetorical question about Rouault: "Since Rembrandt, who in the fine arts has been so intimately, so naturally, so forcefully Christian?"[2] Undoubtedly, Rouault ranks as one of the most significant representatives of Christian art among the modern masters. He was the one artist to whom Pope Paul VI dedicated a separate room in the collection of modern art in the Vatican Museums in the 1970s. Paintings, such as *La Sainte Face (*1933, **no. 41**), or individual etchings of the *Miserere*-cycle, are found in countless catechisms and religious books of the second half of the twentieth century. In fact, because of them, Rouault was labeled a "church artist." But this perception should be balanced with reality: Rouault received official recognition from the Catholic Church only at a relatively late date. With only a few rare exceptions, he did not work on its behalf in any sense.

Furthermore, Rouault repeatedly resisted any overall classification of himself as a "religious artist." Indeed, he rejected the concept of a purely "sacred art" in the sense intended by the Ateliers d'Art Sacré of Maurice Denis and Georges Desvallières. Wherever art became too programmatic (including in the domain of the church), he was happy to point out its full autonomy: "There is no sacred art. There is just art pure and simple, and that's enough to take up a life."[3]

As a founding member of the legendary Salon d'Automne in 1903, Rouault in his thirties was (along with André Derain, Albert Marquet, and Henri Matisse) one of the leading figures of the early-twentieth-century French avant-garde. As the exhibition entitled "Rouault–Matisse, correspondances" has recently demonstrated, Rouault's early paintings of prostitutes, clowns, and judges—anticipating Expressionism by several years—are occasionally more vigorous and bold than those of his former fellow-student, Henri Matisse.[4] Likewise, the attention which Ambroise Vollard, the famous art dealer and patron of Paul Cezanne, Pablo Picasso, and Marc Chagall, paid the painter from 1907 on is an unmistakable sign of his importance in the circle of the young modern painters.

For a long time, narrators of the story of Rouault's reception often suppressed either his early modern, presumably "unchristian," work; or the supposedly "unmodern" later work inspired by Christian faith. Consequently, this early Expressionist and founder of the Salon d'Automne was accorded an important place in the modern age from the standpoint of art history. By contrast, his late work, strongly determined by religion, has been considered a step backward in light of the modern inclination toward complete artistic autonomy.

The reverse was true when it came to acceptance of Rouault's work by Catholic critics. Thus, in 1958, after the death of Rouault, Herbert Schade, S.J., wrote in the German journal *Stimmen der Zeit* of the artist's "grandeur and limits"[5] as a representative of modern Christian painting. He made a strong distinction between the religious motifs of the late work as an unquestionable "l'art pour Dieu" (art for God's sake) and the "unredeemed quality" of the early work shaped by doubt and rebellion. In both cases, this type of polarization between periods and the evaluation based on them is unsuited to Rouault's work. The polarization rests squarely on the assumption that one must accept the incompatibility between striving toward artistic autonomy and an art born of a Christian commitment. In Rouault, the modern age's "l'art pour l'art" ("art for art's sake") and the pre-modern world's "l'art pour l'homme/pour Dieu" ("art for humanity's/God's sake") were intrinsically linked.

This linkage especially comes to the fore in Rouault's frequent description of himself as a "pèlerin de l'art" (pilgrim of art).[6] So the word "pilgrim" implies an essentially religious component while the related determination "of art" points to the meaning of art. But just what concrete relation do these two concepts have here to one another? Is art intended as a means to an end or is it itself the pilgrim's very end? The ambivalence of this declaration reveals the central tension out of which Rouault's work developed. In what follows, I will examine particular intersections of these aspects in the development of his later work and attempt to present a view of Rouault's work as an organic whole.

I. "Biblical landscapes": Religious motifs without explicit iconography

A great many of Rouault's motifs were present early on in his work and ran throughout his later creations or reappeared there in different rhythms. Stephan Koja writes:

> Continuity and a nearly imperceptible ripening and growth of a once discovered canon of expression and iconographic repertoire are more characteristic of Rouault than abrupt changes in style. He opened up his own spiritual Cosmos down to the last dimension, instead of becoming a fleeting visitor of many worlds.[7]

Rouault often had to hear critics say that his continuity resulted from a lack of innovative power.

However, a closer look shows that he continually circled around his motifs as one would in a meditation, hoping to regenerate them by newly freshened efforts from within. In this fashion he did, albeit more slowly and often unnoticed, come to more enduring and independent innovations. Among the most original and beautiful fruits of this way of working is his "Biblical landscape" (*paysage biblique*) motif, as well as his so-called "Pierrots with bouquets of flowers" (*Pierrots au bouquet de fleurs*). Both of these motifs should be seen as genuine contributions by Rouault to the heritage of the "modern."

In a certain sense, as a characteristic hybrid of secular and religious subjects, the "Biblical landscape" is a symbol of the crossover of "l'art pour l'art" and "l'art pour Dieu" and ought to occupy a special place of honor. As early as the period shortly after the completion of his years at the École des Beaux-Arts, the motif of the "animated landscape"—the "*paysage animé*"—was found in Rouault's work. Although by this time his subjects were hardly historical anymore, the "animated landscape" stood him clearly in the tradition of historical painting. When this motif appeared again in a simplified form at the end of Rouault's early expressionist phase, typical figures—mothers with children, marginal societal types, such as beggars and refugees—appear throughout and come closer to the viewer. Along with the vertical lines of the trees, they produce a syncopated rhythm in front of the various horizontal planes of the landscape.

During the years of intensive work on the prints of the *Miserere* (1912-1922), the almost fully isolated human figure moved into the foreground of Rouault's work. In expressive contrasts of black and white, figures, half-figures, and monumental heads come forward, extremely close to the viewer,

sometimes in a threatening way. With the pathos proper to them they still are clearly bound to Expressionism. Nonetheless, the *Miserere* cycle is of cardinal importance for the late work of Rouault as well. Already in the *Miserere* we see crystallized forms of certain characters and attitudes that will be critical to his later creations.

In 1922, when the painter was beginning to transfer the individual prints to copper plates, his friend, the writer André Suarès, wrote to him:

> I could wish that, without your giving up painting figures, in which you have such solid and strong expression, you would do more with landscapes. In my opinion you could do something which hasn't been done in a long time: paint the religious landscape.[6]

Obviously Suarès had in mind the pictures of landscapes of the earlier years and thought of their being combined with the religiously determined canon of figures come to maturity in the *Miserere*.

In 1927, shortly after Rouault had concluded the lengthy work on the printing plates for the *Miserere*, the first significant fruit of renewed interest in landscapes appeared in the illustrated volume *Paysages légendaires* (Legendary Landscapes), which brought together six lithographs and fifty reproductions of drawings of imaginary landscapes. Later, in the middle of the 1930s, these landscapes were (following Suarès's suggestion) united with the modified canon of figures from the *Miserere*. This was the birth of the "Biblical landscape" motif. Here, a great many of the human figures who had been the center of Rouault's focus for so long now moved further back, once again, into the landscape, receiving ever stronger compositions within it. Subsequently, this motif ran through the artist's varied creations, like a *cantus firmus* as *Paysage biblique* (Biblical Landscape), *Paysage intime* (Intimate Landscape), *Nocturne chrétien* (Christian Evening), or more simply, *Nocturne d'automne* (Autumnal Evening).

One of the uncontested major works among these is *Nocturne chrétien* (**fig. 1**). This is a clearly recognizable work of his final creative period: its

Fig. 1. Georges Rouault, *Nocturne chrétien*, 1952, oil, ink and gouache on canvas, 37 2/5 × 25 4/5 in. Musee National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France. AM3171P. Photo Credit : CNAC/MNAM/ Dist. Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, NY. Photo: Philippe Migeat

thick, loose application of colors produces fine combinations of warm yellow and red as well as cool green and blue tones. A broad expanse of water spreads itself out before the golden yellow light of the setting sun. As the viewer looks down from an elevated position, the two small isles and the incoming boat in the foreground tend to be perceived as being on top of one another. Furthermore, because of the nearly undifferentiated treatment of fore-, middle-, and background, the painting seems, as do the major part of Rouault's later landscapes, like a vertical structure projected onto the level plane. In most of them, a broad path leads through many branchings toward the horizon where it ends in a group of houses with a tower rising among them. The sky above is almost always dominated by a yellow or whitish yellow sun outlined in black. In this 1952 example, the sun sits low and ignites an intensely warm yellow flame on the horizon while

the lake and its islands have already sunk into the broken light of dusk. Here and there, in yellow gleamings in the silhouettes of trees and figures, the spent day still lingers. In the upper vault of the sky, however, the dark blue of the night's firmament already breaks through.

The shadowy arrangement of the figures on the bottom edge of the painting is hardly distinguishable from its surroundings. This too is typical of the ideal landscapes in Rouault's later work. Frequently, there are just a few brushstrokes to place the figure of Christ in conversation with other figures before the eyes of the beholder. Among them, children, over whom Christ is spreading his hands, can occasionally be recognized; or perhaps the figure of a Samaritan woman balancing a jug of water on her head. These sparingly employed signs have nothing anecdotal about them. They, too, remain shadowy and are so naturally fitted into the composition that they could easily have sprung from a purely formal intention. In the example of the *Nocturne chrétien*, considering the picture's title, the trinity of figures, discernibly a man, woman, and child, might suggest the Holy Family. But their being in a boat and the man's standing with upraised arms about to cast a fishing-net contradict this. Rouault combined here, almost playfully, various associations which all appertain to the biblical context: on the one hand, "Evening" and "Holy Family"; on the other, "Fishers," "Fishers of Men" and "Lake (Gennesaret)." They have been so naturally unified by the artist that the beholder is undisturbed by any seeming inexplicability of their iconography.

In the supposed lack of iconographic clarity, here and in many other paintings on the same subjects, a special openness is shown which takes away nothing from the meanings of the respective Biblical stories and, in fact, opens them at the same time onto a universal reality. Similarly, this reality appears again in concretely Christian light. Here, Rouault's painting techniques play as important a role as the iconography; they assume a quasi-iconographic meaning.

Thus, as observed by Hans Urs von Balthasar, Rouault's landscapes have a "luminosity glowing from within" which "makes them a holy earth, whether they depict Christ among women or everyday poor people, whether they be called Galilean or just any landscape whatsoever."[9] In these works it is difficult to decide whether Rouault was guided more by considerations of content or form in shaping details. In the creative process, both form and content seem to have been standing in a constant equitable dialogue. They blend together in an inseparable unity. It is precisely here that the differing iconographies find their solution and become eloquent witnesses to the compatibility of "l'art pour l'art" and "l'art pour Dieu".

II. "Form, color, harmony": Stylistic renewal out of earlier inheritance

In light of the title "Nocturne," frequently used by Rouault, the characteristic luminosity described above has been called an "evening light" by Fabrice Hergott.[10] With the help of this light it becomes possible to join the individual elements of the paintings under a common designation and reconcile them to one another. This, according to Hergott, makes Rouault—in the etymological sense of the term—a "re-ligious" painter.[11] But with what artistic means does Rouault achieve this luminosity so typical of his paintings? Again and again in this context one is referred back to his apprenticeship and work in stained-glass painting. He spoke repeatedly in his writings and letters of the enduring impressions of this period. Thus, he reminisced in a letter of 1911 to Suarès about his lonesome noonday-hours in the midst of unfinished glass-mosaics as "mon paradis" (my paradise).[12]

However, the relevance of this early experience to his own artistic work became apparent only slowly to Rouault. In fact, it might have been his encounter with a second craft that was actually of decisive importance. While Rouault, together with Matisse, Pierre Bonnard, and Maurice de Vlaminck, was painting ceramics and many times firing them with various glazes between 1906 and 1912 in the workshop of André Metthey, memories of once having fired colored glass could have been reawakened. Whatever the source, from the years 1911-1912 onward there appear the first signs of an ever more pronounced blending of luminous colors

and dark enclosing contours reminiscent of the glass-painting workshop.

In fact, similar stylistic characteristics can already be found at the end of the nineteenth century in the paintings of the post-Impressionists Paul Gauguin, Vincent van Gogh, and Émile Bernard. In response to the tendency in Impressionism toward an increasing dissolution of motifs, these artists achieved comparable effects through recourse to enamel art and spoke of it as "cloisonnisme."[13]

With Rouault, however, the inspiration from glass-painting came not from merely formal aspects but from the very spirit of the craft itself. Looking back, he wrote in his *Soliloques*, "Color intoxicated the young apprentice. Even before he had cut his fingers on the sharp edges of the broken pieces his eyes were captivated by the luminous tones of certain old glass windows to be restored."[14] Perhaps the experiences of that time might even be seen as the painter's own artistic initiation. In any case, the fascination with color awakened here runs through his entire artistic creation. For Rouault, it was not a matter of simply exploiting the possibilities, but rather of bringing out the value of individual colors through their interaction with others: "Neither the great number of color tones nor the richness of their facets but only the style and manner in which the artist composes them can provide lasting delight to the eye."[15]

Rouault's choice of colors, however, doubtless invites one to think of the example of medieval church windows. Along with combinations of deep blue, violet, and green found in the windows of the cathedral of Chartres, one also finds abundant warm glowing carmine and brown tones as well as delicate shadings of yellow and white. Pure and blended colors come together in vibrant light. Even the repeated painting-over of the sharply outlined fields by means of a nuanced application of colors evokes—consciously or unconsciously—the effect of patina as it forms in glass windows at the edges of individual panes near the lead strips joining them.

Additionally, a further decisive element in Rouault's work is perceived here: like a glass-painter, Rouault sets his different colored "panes" within the framework of "lead strips." As in the illustration *Comme à l'herbe, l'eau de la fontaine…*

Fig. 2. Georges Rouault, *Comme à l'herbe, l'eau de la fontaine…*(illustration to André Suarès's *Passion*) 1935-36, oil, ink and gouache on paper, marouflé on canvas, 11 4/5 × 7 4/5 in. Idemitsu Museum of Arts, Tokyo; © Idemitsu Museum of Arts

(Like the water of the fountain to the grass..., **fig. 2**), Rouault often gave a picture its own frame in which the contours, like the lead strips in the lancets of the church windows, have their beginning and end points. Thus, somewhat to the left side of the picture the frame is joined to the line of the kneeling woman. In similar fashion, the left arm and both feet of the seated Christ leaning toward her touch the frame on the right and at the bottom. In the middle of the picture where the framework's branches meet, they seem to be overpowered by the light of yellows and whites.

The strong interweaving of individual elements of the painting with the frame brings about yet another intensification of the two-dimensional quality of the painting. Formally, within the frame the figures are firmly set in the forward-most plane and therefore under the specific conditions of the surface. In place of the illusion of perspective there comes into play the depth effect of color itself with

its multiple strata and their various ways of reflecting light.

While Rouault, as a rule, employed oil and gouache for colors, the black contours are mostly in a thoroughly impenetrable India ink, a resource derived (according to its specific function in Rouault's paintings) from graphic arts. The model for this strict separation of the graphical and pictorial elements of the picture seems to have been, once again, stained-glass-painting. Reaching back to the familiar craft, Rouault separated more consistently than almost any other artist of his time these elements—ascribing to each one an extreme autonomy, only to unite them anew in a harmonious whole. While the great precursor of abstract art, Wassily Kandinsky, took the rational path of abstract construction, Rouault principally followed the sensuous-material impulses of the color itself and pushed their possibilities to the limits of concreteness. For Rouault, the power of color developed most strongly, not in the free play of the artist's subjectivity, but in the throbbing tension between reality and possibility of the colors themselves.

In the works of the 1940s and 1950s, Rouault pushed this tension so far that the material structure of the color became an independent means of expression. This often led to layers of colors centimeters thick, producing relief-like surfaces on the canvas. They illustrate in a striking way Rouault's understanding of painting as a way of "collaborating with the material."[16] Some scholars have recognized in Rouault's layering technique parallels with more recent currents of abstract art. Rainer Beck, for example, links this phenomenon with the emerging tendencies of Tachisme.[17] Yet, even for Beck, this comparison appears meaningful only insofar as it can illustrate the scope of the effective material impulses.

Although Rouault pursued this technique with no less boldness, he did not abandon the limits of the object. Frequently, in his later work, such as the *Nocturne chrétien* from 1952 (**fig. 1**), the graphic framework is dominated by the overpowering color. The viewer is reminded of a church window flooded with evening light, which, through the power of the sun behind it, almost makes the lead fittings disappear. Nevertheless, the underlying framework still essentially holds the composition together and squarely places the individual colors.

III. "Pèlerin de l'art": Rouault's 'struggle' for perfection

When Rouault spoke of himself as a "pilgrim of art," this assertion implied, before any question about its religious or artistic intent, an identification with the pilgrim's *attitude*. This means, essentially, an orientation toward a reality transcending one's own activity and thus entails two contrary principles: on the one hand, the consciousness of the transitory nature of one's own activity; and on the other hand, the attempt, nevertheless, to meet the demands of the ever greater reality *within* this activity.

These two principles determined Rouault's artistic creation from his earliest period. They manifested themselves in his later work by the characteristic painting and repainting as well as in the great number of unfinished works left behind. In them, occasionally in tragic form, Rouault's high artistic standard coincides with his constant feeling of falling short, a feeling he had already shared in a letter to Suarès in 1913: "A dreadful side of my nature is that I am never satisfied with myself and can never really be completely happy about my success. Something in my eyes and in my mind always compels me to move further on."[18]

This consciousness moved Rouault in 1917 when he signed an exclusive contract with Vollard, giving the dealer rights to all he had already produced and would produce in the future, to insert a proviso permitting him to finish his works "according to his own rhythm."[19] In addition, a great many of the 770 works then acquired by Vollard were unfinished at the time of the contract and thereby remained in the possession of the artist. In the years following, however, he had neither the time nor the strength to bring them to conclusion. Rouault complained repeatedly about this in his letters to Vollard, who swamped him with ever more orders for illustrations and for some of the sketches transformed into oils. Friends said that Rouault sometimes worked day and night in the studio that Vollard had provided for him in the Rue Martignac,

almost as if under supervision, and still could not keep up with his own internal demands as well as those of the dealer. Even when Vollard, beginning in 1923, offered him a bonus, based on format, for every finished picture, this hardly changed the situation.

Things took a turn for the worse after Vollard's fatal automobile accident in 1939 when his heirs locked up the artist's studio and declared the 819 paintings found there, whatever their stage of completion, to be their property. Countless futile efforts by Rouault to gain access to the missing works—his "clavier pictural" (pictorial keyboard)[20]—ended up in a long and sensational test case in court. In 1947, the court judged that the artist had the moral right to his work as the proviso in the contract with Vollard had stipulated. Scarcely less sensational was Rouault's burning (in 1948) of almost half the retrieved paintings before an official of the court. He believed that at the advanced age of almost seventy-seven he could no longer complete them and so sought in this way to keep them from "commercial exploitation."[21].

By 1947, less than ten years of artistic activity remained for Rouault because of his increasing physical frailty. When he died in February 1958 he had in fact completed a number of the works recovered from Vollard's heirs. Found along with these, however, were hundreds of recently begun unfinished paintings. These bear witness not simply to the failing of his power from age but also, and above all, to the immense passion for painting which still drove him in his very last years. Taking into account their status as "*inachevés*" (unfinished), Rouault's heirs decided not to sell the 891 works found in his studio after his death. Instead, they donated them as a group in 1963 to the Musée national d'art moderne in Paris.

After a first well-received exhibition at the Musée du Louvre in 1964, these 891 "inachevés" regrettably fell into oblivion. Only recently have they been made available to the public at the Centre Pompidou in a room devoted exclusively to Rouault. As a rare studio exhibition, they make it possible to observe directly the artist's intense process of creation, frequently lasting for years and sometimes even decades. Their different degrees of achievement allow the viewer to imagine the earlier stages of the finished paintings and become, in a certain sense, the "*journal intime*" (intimate diary)[22] of the finished works' own respective "pilgrimage" to perfection.

Sometimes, it is a matter of nothing more than a loose arrangement of bits of color whose harmony recalls Rouault's often quoted answer to the question about the frequent motif of judges in his works: "A black biretta and red robe make a striking color combination."[23] At other times the multiple superimposed thick coats of paint document equally the passion of artistic wrestling and the "need" for perfection. In the final analysis, however, they show how Rouault sought balance in each step of his work—balance in the sense of the "trinité bénie" (blessed trinity) of form-color-harmony so often referenced by him.[24]

Accomplishing this ultimate balance was the stated goal of the self-proclaimed "pèlerin de l'art," but in the end it necessarily remained a "promised land"[25] that could not be achieved in the pilgrim's earthly lifetime. Its "*semper major*"—the "ever greater" aspect that ancient theologians attributed to the Infinite always beyond our capacity to comprehend using finite concepts—could meet expectations only by analogy. In this way, however, the finite painting points beyond itself and remains—in a certain sense—"transparent" to the aimed higher reality, just as stained-glass painting is transparent to the illuming sun. As a corollary, when this openness and transparency becomes the central point of the artist's efforts, "completing" the painting, in the conventional sense of producing an end-product, becomes secondary. The creative process itself becomes primary, a kind of ongoing dialogue with the ever-greater reality to which the artist aspires.

Conclusion

In the end, some of the most beautiful works finally seemed to have been created when Rouault had freed himself from his obsession with perfection. Angela Lampe speaks of the unfinished works as revealing a "Rouault even freer, looser, and

Fig. 3. Georges Rouault, *Femme au corsage bleu et rouge* (Woman with Blue and Red Corsage), 1940-48, oil, ink, and gouache on paper, 24 1/3 × 17 1/5 in. Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris. AM4231(494). Photo Credit : CNAC/MNAM/Dist. Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, NY. Photo: Philippe Migeat

more sensuous"[26] than had been known up until the present. A concluding glance at the example of the *Femme au corsage bleu et rouge* **(fig. 3)** demonstrates this. Although the work's status as an "inachevé" allows the viewer to imagine it as a kind of "first draft," the composition shows such assurance in design and treatment of color that one is also tempted to pronounce the result as "finished." In spite of the fact that the structure of the shoulders, the hair, and a part of the forehead and nose remain undefined, the whole of the composition is, nevertheless, of a nearly perfect harmony and balance. Between the bright red of the shoulders and the powerful ultramarine of the dress and background are the mediating sand- and skin-colored tones of the face and part of the neck. On the eyelids and on the décolleté, these tones are supplemented by a bold yellow. Even the few chalk markings, which often indicate Rouault's intention to make certain corrections or extensions, seem to be final culminating points that lend added life to the portrayal.

Both the path and the terminus of the "pèlerin de l'art," at least on the level of analogy, unexpectedly appear to be making contact in this work. So too is the pair of allegedly irreconcilable opposites: "art for art's sake" and "art for humanity's/God's sake." Like a veritable "feast of the senses," *Femme au corsage bleu et rouge* seems completely satisfying as an aesthetic whole and is nonetheless far more than simple *décor*.

The woman represented is full of melancholy and the knowledge of life. That affirms, once again, what has already repeatedly been stressed with regard to Rouault's works. When he painted clowns and judges, prostitutes and pierrots, there always appeared, behind and within the particular portrayed individual, a more universal form—the *Ecce Homo* (Behold the Man) of Christ and by implication the question of human existence as such. In the final analysis, here as well as in the artist's whole oeuvre, artistic autonomy and Christian commitment come down to the same thing. Likewise, Rouault's endless striving for perfection in art seems to have been identical with his relentless desire and search for God.

Translated from the German by William Bellis

Endnotes

1 This essay is an excerpt from one originally published to mark the fiftieth anniversary of Georges Rouault's death: Stephan Dahme, "'Pilger der Kunst'. Zum 50. Todestag des Malers Georges Rouault," *Stimmen der Zeit* 226/2 (Freiburg: Herder, February 2008): 101-116. Kind permission of the publishers to print this translated excerpt is gratefully acknowledged.

2 Maurice Morel, preface to: Georges Rouault, *Miserere* (München: Prestel, 1951) 15.

3 Qtd. in *Georges Rouault,* Pierre Courthion (Paris: Nouvelles Éditions Françaises, 1971) 36.

4 "Rouault, Matisse, correspondances" Musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris, 27 October 2006 - 11 February 2007; Musée départemental Matisse Le Cateau-Cambresis, 25 March -17 June 2007.

5 Herbert Schade, "Georges Rouault. Größe und Grenze moderner christlicher Malerei," *Stimmen der Zeit* 163 (Freiburg: Herder, 1958/59) 210-219.

6 Éric Darragon, "Georges Rouault. Exclusivement peintre parmi les peintres," *Georges Rouault, forme, couleur, harmonie,* catalogue published for the Musée d'art moderne et contemporain de Strasbourg exhibition, 10 November 2006 to 18 March 2007, commissariat Fabrice Hergott (Strasbourg: Musées de Strasbourg, 2006) 70.

7 Stephan Koja, *Georges Rouault. Malerei und Graphik*, (München: Salzburger Landessammlungen Rupertinum 1993) 7.

8 Qtd. in François Chapon and Isabelle Rouault *Œuvre gravé*, 2 vols. (Monaco: Sauret, 1978) 2:76.

9 Qtd. in Koja 156.

10 Fabrice Hergott, "La luce de la sera. Le ultime opere," *Georges Rouault*, ed. Rudy Chiappini (Lugano: Museo d'Arte moderna, 1997) 113+.

11 *Ligare* means "bind, connect"; hence, etymologically "religion" would mean "to reconnect"

12 *Correspondance [de] Georges Rouault [et] André Suarès* (Paris: Gallimard, 1960) 7.

13 See preface to Armand Israël and Jean-Jacques Luthi, *Emile Bernard: 1868-1941: fondateur de l'École de Pont-Aven et précurseur de l'art moderne* (Paris: Éditions de l'Amateur: Éditions des Catalogues raisonnés, 2003). One of the earliest occurrences of the word appears in Edouard Dujardin, "Le cloisonnisme," *Revue Indépendante* (19 May 1888).

14 Georges Rouault," Soliloques," *Sur l'art et sur la vie*, Georges Rouault (Paris: Denoel/Gonthier, 1971) 16.

15 Rouault, *Soliloques* 17. Very likely Rouault had been influenced by the work of chemist M. Eugène Chevreul whose influential *De la loi du contraste simultané des couleurs et de l'assortiment des objets colorés* (On the Law of Simultaneous Contrast of Colors and of the Matching of Colored Objects) had been published in 1839 and went through several editions. For more on Chevreul, see essay by Tara Ward in the present volume.

16 Qtd. in Fabrice Hergott, *Georges Rouault* (Recklinghausen: Bongers, 1993) 19.

17 See Rainer Beck, "Form – Farbe – Harmonie," *Georges Rouault*, ed. Siegfried Gohr (Köln: Josef-Haubrich-Kunsthalle, 1983) 109+. For another association of Rouault with the postwar lyrical abstractionists, see the essay by Jean-Marie Tézé in the present volume, esp. ed. n5.

18 Rouault and Suarès, *Correspondance* 81+. On this aspect of Rouault's tendency to be in a state of incompletion, see Naomi Blumberg essay in present volume.

19 Camille Giertler, "Les dernières œuvres," *Georges Rouault. Forme, couleur, harmonie*, 182.

20 Qtd. in *Georges Rouault, Exposition du Centenaire,* ed. Bernard Dorival (Paris: Musée national d'art moderne, 1971) 153.

21 Angela Lampe, "Work in progress. Les œuvres inachevées," *Forme, couleur, harmonie,* 214.

22 Lampe 216.

23 Qtd. in *Georges Rouault - Œuvres inachevées données à l'État,* Bernard Dorival (Paris: Musée du Louvre 1964) 16.

24 Lampe 215. See, for example, the poetic lines on this "holy trinity" of form-color-harmony in the essay of Nora Possenti Ghiglia in the present volume.

25 Rouault and Suarès, *Correspondance* 230.

26 Lampe 215.

Lacrymae rerum: Creative Intuition of the Transapparent Reality

Bernard Doering

No engraving captures more succinctly and exactly the tone of Georges Rouault's *Miserere* series than plate 27: *Sunt lacrymae rerum* (**no. 27z**). The title comes from a famous line in Virgil's *Aeneid.* When Aeneas arrives at Carthage and, in a temple there, sees a frieze depicting the fall of Troy and the deaths of the Trojan heroes, of his family and his friends, his eyes fill with tears (*lacrimans*), and he exclaims with profound sadness:

> Sunt lacrymae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt.
> "There are tears at the very heart of things,
> and the mortal nature of those things troubles the human mind."[1]

For Rouault, the world of outward appearances, whether human or purely material, contains the seeds of universal death: *We are doomed to die, we ourselves and all that is ours* (**no. 27qq**). It is not surprising that death haunts the *Miserere* series. As excerpts from Rouault's 1912 notebook show, the idea for the project had its genesis that year in the death of his father.[2] All outward appearances mask another world of tears, suffering, and sorrow.

However, two years earlier, Jacques Maritain had foreseen in an uncanny way the central inspiration of the great *Miserere* collection:

> Rouault finds his inspiration, not in some abstract system or some literary emotion, but in what life itself, the life of [his own] time and of [his own country], makes him, so to speak, touch with his finger….What he sees and knows with a strange pity, and what he makes us see, is the misery and lamentable meanness of those times, not the misery of the body alone, but the misery of the soul, the bestiality and the self-satisfied vainglory of the rich and the worldly, the crushing weariness of the poor, and the infirmity of us all.... In this way he creates, without intending to do so, a sequence to the Dances of Death of the waning Middle Ages and the Beggars of Callot.[3]

Maritain would continue to write about art and aesthetics periodically throughout the rest of his life, and his vision continued to be greatly indebted to his friendship with Georges Rouault. How can we explain this

sympathetic understanding as early as 1910 on the part of a young philosopher who, in his friendship with Rouault, had broken through the almost impenetrable class barriers of their times? How can Maritain's highly theorized concept of "creative intuition" in his later career be viewed as an outgrowth of the "strange pity" he had found so attractive in Rouault over forty years earlier?[4]

I. Georges Rouault: born in Belleville

Georges Rouault was born of a working-class family in the Belleville *faubourg* of Paris, in the cellar where his mother had taken refuge to escape a bombardment by government troops during the uprising of the Commune in 1871. A Parisian *faubourg* was not like our suburbs, full of green lawns and spacious houses where we live to escape the crowding and the grime of our city centers. The *faubourgs* were the dingy areas encircling Paris where the poor lived in crowded tenements and dirty hovels next to the factories where they worked (**no. 27i**, *Rue des solitaires*). Rouault considered his origins a badge of honor for the rest of his life. Boasting that he "was born a worker, in a working-class neighborhood," he would declare later:

> In the old faubourg of Long Suffering I was born into the realm of Darkness. On the ancient ocean of pictorial Turpitudes I set my sails against the prevailing winds keeping my distance from certain dilettantes who were pointed day and night in the direction of whatever was "fashionably new"—and compared to them I certainly seemed to be bogged down in a certain legendary past, putting up a sullen resistance, for goodness sake, in those dark days of misery and war [en ces temps noirs de misère et de guerre].[5]

In Rouault's family there reigned an artistic and cultural atmosphere, closely related to working with materials—creating art—the opposite of the bourgeois mentality of buying art for decoration. As a child he spent hours making chalk drawings on the floor of his poor home. On Sundays he took frequent walks with his grandfather along the quays of the Seine searching the bookstalls for prints, especially of Manet and Courbet. His father was an *ébéniste,* a skilled craftsman, a maker of fine furniture, who worked at the Pleyel piano company. He tells of his father wincing when his wife opened a drawer too suddenly or too violently. Wood suffers too, he would tell her.

In 1895, at the age of fourteen, Rouault was apprenticed to a stained-glass restorer. It was at this work that he developed what he called his "passionate taste" for bright colors and his love for ancient stained-glass windows. He had a deep admiration for and an almost mystical affinity to the anonymous happy "companions" of the artisan guilds of Romanesque times and the early Middle Ages, who carved on the ridgepoles of cathedrals the words "*Non nobis domine non nobis sed nomini tuo da glorian* (Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory) and whose names remain unknown to us."[6] When as an apprentice he was given bus fare for an errand on the other side of Paris, he would run alongside the bus in order to keep a few *sous* for himself to buy paints with no loss of time or money to his employer. And when his long workday was over, he would walk the breadth of Paris and back, to attend an art class.[7]

Rouault had a very difficult time at the beginning of his career. He was disparaged by art critics who completely misunderstood him. Léon Bloy, whose 1897 novel *La Femme pauvre* (*The Woman who was Poor*) had first attracted Rouault's attention, had no appreciation of Rouault's paintings. Bloy joined the critics in ridiculing his *"déformations"* (deformations) and *"gribouillage"* (scribbling or doodling). There was no way to classify him. Was he a Primitive like Henri Rousseau (1844-1910)? Was he a Fauve like his close colleague André Derain (1880-1954)? In spite of this treatment, Rouault continued to frequent the home of this strange prophet whom he greatly admired, especially for his voluntary poverty and his all-consuming love of the poor. Bloy "accused [Rouault], affectionately, but without much consideration for his feelings, of falling into a demonic form of art and of finding delight in ugliness and deformity.

[Rouault] would listen, motionless, ashen and silent."[8] It was at the Bloy household that Rouault first met Jacques Maritain.

II. Jacques Maritain: born a bourgeois

To all appearances an intimate friendship between Rouault and Maritain was most improbable (**fig. 1**). Maritain by birth was a member of that segment of French society, *la grande bourgeoisie*, for which Rouault generally felt deep hostility.[9] Maritain had been reared by his mother Geneviève Favre, daughter of Jules Favre, one of the founders of the Third Republic,[10] in an atmosphere of nineteenth-century liberal Protestantism and humanitarian rationalism.

Fig. 1. Jacques Maritain as a young man. Photo: Cercle d'Études, J. et R. Maritain, Kolbsheim

Maritain, however, was a *grand bourgeois* of another sort (**fig. 2**).[11] As an adolescent he wanted to become a "traitor to his class" and covered the walls of his room with incendiary slogans. During those years he became the close friend of his mother's cook, Angèle Bâton, and of her day laborer husband François, whom he considered "a conscious and organized proletarian," and with both he began a correspondence that would continue into his adulthood. Each evening, to the dismay of his mother, he would join the couple in their room behind the kitchen where all three read together and commented on the latest issue of the socialist daily, *La Petite république*. The young Maritain admired François as an incarnation of "the only true humanity," of those who already work hard at the age when the son of a bourgeois, like Maritain himself, enjoys all the privileges "without doing anything, without creating anything."[12]

Maritain met his wife Raïssa while he was organizing a student demonstration against the brutal suppression of socialist students in Russia. Together they helped Charles Péguy found his Christian socialist bookshop and publish his bimonthly review *Cahiers de la Quinzaine*. Disillusioned by the materialist and rationalist humanitarianism of the day, they made a vow to commit suicide together if, within a certain time, they found no spiritual meaning for their lives or the possibility of attaining truth. Their discovery (thanks to Péguy) of the lectures by Henri Bergson (1859-1941), which suggested the possibility of attaining some level of the truth, led them to put off this decision. Shortly after their marriage in 1904, they too read Bloy's *The Woman Who Was Poor* and, like Rouault, arranged to meet the author. The overwhelming encounter with this strange "Pilgrim of the Absolute"[13] led, a year later, to their Catholic baptism, with Bloy as their godfather.

Bloy's writings and conversations were filled with fulminations against the complacent and indifferent rich. He insisted on the centrality of the "Cross" in the life of the Christian and on the role of suffering in the life of the entire Mystical Body of Christ. Maritain was impressed enough to include a series of

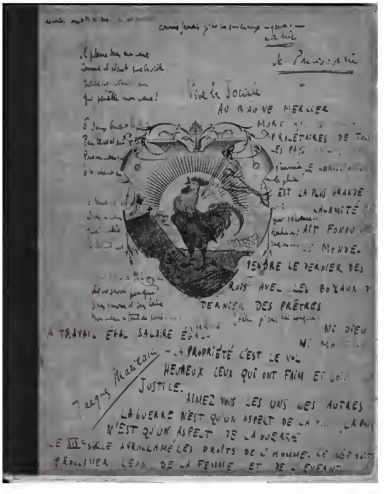


Fig. 2. Jacques Maritain's philosophy notebook, 1899.

Bloy's reflections on the subject of suffering in an essay on his godfather.

> —Man has places in his heart that do not yet exist and into which suffering enters so that they may come to be. I would never finish if I wanted to describe the marvelous effects of suffering on man's faculties and on his heart. It is the handmaiden of creation.
>
> —Suffering passes away—to have suffered does not.
>
> —A heart without affliction is like a world without revelation. It sees God by a feeble glimmer of light.
>
> —Our hearts are filled with angels when they are filled with affliction.[14]

III. A Fruitful Friendship

In 1909 the Maritains moved to Versailles and the Rouaults followed in the summer of 1912. There they met frequently. The Rouaults took meals with the Maritains on an almost weekly basis and they had long conversations together. They discussed religion, mysticism, social justice, the philosophy of beauty, and the practice of art. Rouault found in Maritain an understanding and sympathetic listener with whom he could escape from his solitude.

The influence between the painter and the philosopher was mutual. Nora Possenti Ghiglia has described their friendship:

> It is difficult, for anyone who was not a part of this friendship, to grasp the value of the exchange between the philosopher and the painter "in the inexpressible regions of the heart" (as Maritain put it), but everything leads us to believe that this exchange was as fruitful for the one as for the other. And perhaps the dialogue that resulted from the contact between their personal sensitivities and experiences was less noticeable in explicit allusions in their writings, than in the very sensitivity with which Maritain approached the problems of art and poetry, and in the way in which Rouault gradually emerged from the "abyss of sorrow and of infinite melancholy" that he bore within himself.[15]

In 1910, well before he published anything on philosophy, Maritain wrote his first text on art: an introduction to the catalogue for Rouault's first solo exhibition held from February to March of that year at the Galérie Druet; he published under the pseudonym "Jacques Favelle."[16] Maritain later recalled that Rouault had asked him to choose a name for his signature that would suggest a connection with the workers who built the cathedrals of France. "Favelle" was a good find as a working-class name; it concealed Jacques's identity as the bourgeois grandson of Jules Favre.[17]

In the Druet preface, Maritain called Rouault a true primitive, a popular, or people's, artist, whose frank and naïve inspiration was very close to that of the happy artisans of days gone by, those of Romanesque and early medieval times. He spoke of Rouault's "naïve images, made by a patient workman who loved his tools and the matter he was working on," and who loved his craft "with a serious and obstinate passion and with a constant need to perfect his technique." As the title of Rouault's self-portrait painted in 1926 suggests—*L'Apprenti—ouvrier* **(no. 22e)**—at least as late as the age of fifty-five, Rouault continued to see himself primarily as a medieval craftsman (and perhaps an apprentice).[18]

In sum, these two unlikely friends from such different socio-economic backgrounds shared a profound respect for the working poor. "I belong to the people" Rouault wrote in 1925, "much more so than many of those sensualists I know so well and who profess to 'belong to the people.'"[19] Ten years later, the year of the Great Depression, the start of the Spanish Civil War between fascists and communists, and the year in which France voted in the socialist Popular Front government as a rebuff to the right wing, Maritain would publish his essay "To Exist with the People" (1936). Here

he distinguished between "acting for" and "existing with" or "suffering with."

> To act for belongs to the realm of mere benevolence. To exist with and to suffer with, to the realm of love and unity. Love is given to an existing, concrete being....To exist with is an ethical category...it means loving someone in the sense of becoming one with him, of bearing his burdens, of living a common moral life with him, of feeling with him and suffering with him.
>
> If we love that living human thing which we call the people...we will want first and foremost to exist with them, to suffer with them and remain in communion with them.
>
> Before "doing good" to them and working for their benefit, before practicing the politics of one group or another...we must first choose to exist with them, and to suffer with them, to make their pain and destiny our own.[20]

Maritain's "suffering with" ("compassion" in the etymological sense of the word) is the same as Rouault's "strange pity," which (in the words of the Druet catalogue preface of 1910) "makes us see" and "makes us know" the difficult destiny of the poor.[21] Maritain would spend several decades attempting to formulate an art theory that would account for this aesthetic act of seeing and knowing.

Fig. 3. Cover of the 1920 edition of *Art et scolastique*, by Jacques Maritain

IV. An evolving aesthetic: creative intuition of the transapparent

In his preface for the 1910 Druet exhibition, Maritain ("Jacques Favelle"), influenced by the intuitionism of Henri Bergson, portrayed Rouault as an artist searching for "the most immediate reality." In a crucial passage he wrote: "As much as it is true that he endeavors to represent the most immediate objects and beings, M. Rouault does not intend to make a textual transcription of their traits; he knows that truth is never found in the copy."[22]

In 1920, Maritain published *Art and Scholasticism*, later saying that Rouault had been the book's "living inspiration" **(fig. 3)**.[22] Maritain was not disturbed by the "*distortions*," the "*déformations*," the "*gribouillages*," that his recently deceased godfather had ridiculed so insensitively. Maritain applied principles of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas to the concept of beauty, whereby the "effulgent" form shines through the matter it *informs*. Art, in Maritain's writings of the 1920s, aimed not at copying the outward appearance of things like a naturalist. Rather, like post-Impressionists, Cubists, and neo-Classicists, art needed to de-form the object in order to capture its inner reality. Moreover, following Aquinas, Maritain insisted that art aimed at capturing the radiant form at the heart of things. Thanks to this hylomorphic theory of art Maritain could elaborate his principle, stated a decade earlier, that truth is never found in the copy of outward appearances.

> If the artist studies and cherishes nature as much as and much more than the works of the masters, it is not to copy nature, but to base himself on nature...Nature is therefore a stimulus and check to artists, not a model to be slavishly copied. They stand before her

> in timidity and awe, but with the timidity of modesty, not of servility. They imitate her, in a truly filial spirit, and according to the creative agility of the spirit; but their imitation is not literal and servile.[24]

Truth was always found within. However, that "radiant form" within was a long way from the "the tears at the heart of things" sung of by Virgil and engraved by Rouault.

In 1924, Maritain published yet another review of the artist, when Rouault made a triumphant return to the Druet Gallery fourteen years after his first exhibition there.[25] Perhaps referring to Arnold Schoenberg's expressionist *Pierrot Lunaire* (1912), Maritain found in the pale complexion of a circus figure "something here of the moonlit clown [*clown lunaire*]—a surprising mixture of pity and bitterness" manifesting Rouault's "*insatiable sympathy* for human things."[26] This review would be reprinted in a greatly enlarged revised edition of *Art and Scholasticism* in 1927.[27] The largest single addition to this new edition was a long essay entitled "Frontières de la poésie" ("Frontiers of Poetry")[28] which would in turn be reprinted in *Frontières de la poésie et autres essais* (*Frontiers of Poetry and Other Essays*) (1935), one year before "To Exist with the People."[29] (Among the "other essays" was "Three Painters: Georges Rouault, Gino Severini, Marc Chagall.")

Not surprisingly during these "menacing times," when both Surrealism and Expressionism flourished,[30] Maritain was less formalistic and more expressionist in his consideration that apprehending the truth depended to some extent upon "irritation." If a painter belonged (as Rouault did) to the family of the very great artists, it was above all else because of his poetics (*poétique*). "But this is so not because of some abstract recomposition. It is rather the effect of a creative emotion which the irritation of an infallibly sensitive eye and a profound imagination provoke deep within the soul."[31] Soon after Maritain wrote these words, the Second World War began. Jacques and Raïssa would live as exiles in the United States and Maritain would leave the world of aesthetics for more political concerns.

Fig. 4. Jacques Maritain at Princeton University in 1953. Photo: Cercle d'Études, J. et R. Maritain, Kolbsheim

In 1952, after the war had ended, the paths of Rouault and Maritain crossed again in a profound and matured way (**fig. 4**). That year, Maritain delivered the first A.W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts, published as *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*.[32] One year later, the Museum of Modern Art in New York held a major retrospective of Rouault's paintings for which Maritain wrote the foreword to the catalogue.[33] More than three decades had passed since Maritain's first edition of *Art and Scholasticism* and more than four decades since his pseudonymous contribution to the catalogue for the 1910 exhibition. How had his vision changed?

In *Creative Intuition* (1953), Maritain repeated what he had already laid out in 1920: "Saint Thomas insisted that art imitates nature in *her operation*—not in respect to natural appearances, but in respect to the ways in which nature herself operates ..." This distinction had been essential to his original insight which allowed him to declare that truth is never in the copy. The "imitation" was not of nature's outward forms but rather of nature's internal dynamism. Having restated his neo-scholastic foundations, Maritain could now expand on those earlier insights and offer a way of accommodating Rouault's "tears at the very heart of things."

> One day, after a walk in the wintertime, Rouault told me he had just discovered, by looking at snow-clad fields in the sunshine,

> how to paint the white trees of spring. Such a genuine concept of "imitation" affords a ground and justification for the boldest kinds of transposition, transfiguration, deformation or recasting of natural appearances, in so far as they are the means to make the work manifest intuitively the transapparent reality that has been grasped by the artist.[34]

This "transapparent" reality was something more complex than the Thomistic "form" that he had proposed in 1920. In this mature work (now written in the age of The New York School's Abstract Expressionism), Maritain insisted to a far greater degree on the materiality of the process than he had decades earlier in the age of high modernism.

> Creative intuition and imagination do not proceed in an angelic or demonic manner.[35] They are human, bound to the alertness of sense perception. They grasp a certain transapparent reality through the instrumentality of the eye and of certain natural appearances—they cannot express or manifest it except through the instrumentality of these same natural appearances, recreated, recast, transposed of course, not cast aside and totally replaced by other appearances proper to another realm of Things in the world of visible Being.
>
> ...through feeling the intellect obscurely grasps the meaning in which Things abound, and which are conveyed to an attentive eye through the appearance of natural objects.[36]

What was this "meaning in which Things abound," the meaning of Rouault's world, which his creative intuition turned into a *transapparent* reality? It was principally a world of suffering human beings, both victims and perpetrators of sin and evil, all equally and inevitably subject to death: the poor and their oppressors, clowns, prostitutes, refugees, and Christ.[37]

"We will die, ourselves and all that is ours." Indeed, five years after the MOMA retrospective and the publication of *Creative Intuition*, Rouault would be dead. Maritain's wife Raïssa would die two short years later, dealing Jacques a blow of the severest degree. There are tears at the very heart of things.

Conclusion: connaturality and intuitivity

Over the years Maritain puzzled over the role of affective experience in human understanding, whether between humans, or between the human and the divine. In his *opus magnum, The Degrees of Knowledge* (1932),[38] he says that the highest form of knowledge comes from the *connaturality of charity* or love, from the intimate sharing of "natures" between two persons. On the human level love makes it possible, even without words, to intuit a reality hidden behind the external mask of the other. In a later essay, "Love and Friendship" (published after his death), he wrote: "The intuitivity of an intellect turned toward reality...is *necessary* to the validity of thought as *knowledge...There is no knowledge without intuitivity.*"[39]

If Rouault cultivated very limited relationships with his contemporaries, it was not out of disdain, but because of the impossibility of communicating with them except on the level of a profound artistic and human solidarity—on the level of connaturality and intuitivity.[40] This was precisely the level on which he could communicate with Maritain. The two shared many things: a kind of pristine, childlike innocence, an enlightened sensitivity to beauty, a solidarity with the poor, the downtrodden and the disinherited of this earth, a thirst for justice, and a profound religious sentiment. On all these matters they could communicate on an intimate basis and they did so.

Maritain brought Rouault intimacy, warmth, understanding, and encouragement. Rouault brought Maritain a sharpening of his artistic sensitivity and an intellectual liberation from the smothering constraints of his spiritual and intellectual guides at the time of his conversion. Although it is doubtful that Rouault would have painted

differently had he never met Maritain, without Rouault, we may never have known the youthful *Art and Scholasticism* and its absolute dictum: "Truth is never found in the copy." Nor may we ever have known the mature *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry* in which Maritain was pushed further to insist on the materiality of the process. Far from an angelic imagination, poetic intuitivity is a strange pity for the transapparent reality at the heart of "Things in the world of visible Being," including "ourselves, and all that is ours."

Endnotes

1 Virgil, *Aeneid,* Book I, line 462. Unless otherwise credited, all translations from Latin and French are those of the author of this essay.

2 From Rouault's 1912 notebook, see Schloesser "1902-1920," in this volume.

3 Jacques Maritain [under pseudonym "Jacques Favelle"], preface to the catalogue for *L'Exposition de peintures et céramiques de G. Rouault* (Paris: Galérie E. Druet, 1910), *Oeuvres complètes / Jacques et Raïssa Maritain,* ed. Jean-Marie Allion, Maurice Hany, Dominique and René Mougel, Michel Nurdin, and Heinz R. Schmitz, 16 vols. (Fribourg [Switzerland]: Éditions universitaires; Paris: Éditions Saint-Paul, 1982-200) (hereafter *JRM-OC*) 1: 1077-81. Reprinted in *Cahiers Jacques Maritain* 12 (November 1985) 23-26; and *Rouault. Première période 1903-1920,* ed. Fabrice Hergott (Paris: Éditions du Centre Georges Pompidou, 1992) 200-201.
Maritain's reference is to Jacques Callot's series of 25 etchings known as *Les Gueux* or *Les Mendiants.* For this theme of beggars [*mendiants*] found in Hieronymous Bosch, Jacques Callot, and Rembrandt, see Julius S. Held, "A Rembrandt 'Theme,'" *Artibus et Historiae* 5/10 (1984) 21-34.

4 Jacques Maritain, *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1953).

5 Georges Rouault, "'Le Pêcheur de perles' suivi de 'Batons Rompus,'" *Saisons. Almanach des lettres et des arts* (Éditions du Pavois, Summer 1945): 29-36, see p. 31. I am grateful to Mr. Gilles Rouault for communicating this document.

6 Georges Rouault, *Souvenirs intimes* (Paris, E. Frapier, 1927) 51.

7 Monroe Wheeler, Introduction, *Miserere* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1952).

8 Jacques Maritain, *Frontières de la Poésie, et autres essais* (Paris: Rouart et Fils, 1935) 135.

9 For Maritain's life see Jean-Luc Barré, *Jacques and Raïssa Maritain, Beggars for Heaven,* translated by Bernard Doering (Notre Dame, IN: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 2005); orig. Jean-Luc Barré, *Jacques et Raïssa Maritain: les mendiants du Ciel: biographies croisées* (Paris: Stock, 1995).

10 In fact, after Napoleon III's defeat at Sédan on September 2, 1870, Jules Favre hastily proclaimed the Republic two days later. As Minister of Foreign Affairs, he negotiated the capitulation of Paris, the armistice, and the Peace of Frankfurt on May 10, 1871. This was immediately followed by his government's bloody repression of the Commune during which Georges Rouault was born. See Barré, trans. Doering 9.

11 Figure 2 depicts Jacques Maritain's 1899 notebook from his philosophy course taken from M. Dereux at the Lycée Henri IV. On the left-hand side, Maritain has transcribed Paul Verlaine's poem about love-sickness. *"Il pleure dans mon cœur"* (It rains in my heart), from *Romances sans paroles* (1874). On the right-hand side, the sixteen-year-old has written incendiary slogans of the type with which he also covered his bedroom walls: "Death to the bourgeois. Proletarians of all countries, unite. Christianity is the greatest calamity ever founded in the world. String up the last of the kings with the guts of the last of the priests. Neither God nor Master. Equal pay for equal work. Property is theft. Happy are they who hunger and thirst for justice. Love one another. War is only an aspect of peace: peace is only an aspect of war. The 19th century proclaimed the rights of man. The 20th must proclaim those of the woman and of the child." As Raïssa Maritain would write fifty years later: "Already at the time he took the course in philosophy from M. Dereux at the Lycée Henri IV, the young Maritain of sixteen years rolled around in despair on the floor of his room, because to all the questions he posed—there was no response." See R. Maritain, *Les grandes amitiés* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1949) 65.

12 Barré 17.

13 Léon Bloy, *Le Pèlerin de l'Absolu (1910-1912)* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1914). See also Raïssa Maritain, *We Have Been Friends Together* (Garden City, N.Y.: Image Books, 1961) 138-141; orig. *Les grandes amitiés: Souvenirs* (New York: Éditions de la Maison Française, 1941).

14 Jacques Maritain, "In Homage to Our Dear Godfather Leon Bloy, in *Untrammeled Approaches*, trans. Bernard Doering (Notre Dame, IN: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1997) 37-39; orig. *Approches sans entraves* (Paris: Fayard, 1973).

15 Nora Possenti-Ghiglia, "Jacques Maritain et Rouault: Aux sources d'une féconde amitié," *Cahiers Jacques Maritain* 12 (November 1985) 7-22, see p. 9.

16 Jacques Maritain [under pseudonym "Jacques Favelle"], Druet Préface, cited.

17 Possenti-Ghiglia 10, n12.

18 On the medieval significance of Belleville for Rouault see Anne Davenport, "Neo-Medievalist Realism in Rouault's *Divertissement*" in this catalogue.

19 Georges Rouault, "L'art aujourd'hui," enquête, *Les Cahiers d'Art* 10 (April 1, 1925) 11-18.

20 Jacques Maritain, in *Sept* (June 12, 1937); reprinted as ch. 10 of Maritain, *Raison et raisons: Essais détachés* (Paris: Egloff, 1948); translated in Maritain, *The Range of Reason* (New York: Charles Scribner & Sons, 1952) 227ff.

21 Maritain certainly included himself in that "us." After an ill-advised, very tenuous and much regretted association with the rightist movement Action Française, Maritain published his *Lettre sur l'indépendence* (1935) declaring that he was a partisan of neither the Right nor the Left. However, from the time of his break with Action Française, his most famous works (*Integral Humanism, Man and the State, Christianity and Democracy, The Person and the Common Good, The Rights of Man and Natural Law* show clearly his preferential option for the liberal side of political, social and economic philosophy. His very last essay, which he finished the night before he died, was a utopian reverie on economic justice called "A Society without Money." See Bernard E. Doering, "The Economics of Jacques Maritain," *Review of Social Economy* 43/1 (April 1985): 64-72; and Doering, *Jacques Maritain and the French Catholic Intellectuals* (Notre Dame, IN: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1983). See also Joseph Anthony Amato, *Mounier and Maritain: a French Catholic Understanding of the Modern World* (1975; Ypsilanti, MI: Sapientia Press, 2002).

22 Maritain, Druet preface, *JRM-OC* 1:1078; 1080-81; Stephen Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism: Mystic Modernism in Postwar Paris, 1919-1933* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 2005) 221.

23 Jacques Maritain, *Commonweal*, vol. 68, no. 2 (11 April 1958): 37.

24 Jacques Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism* (New York: Charles Scribner & Sons, 1947) 150 n121. For hylomorphism in Maritain's aesthetics, see Schloesser, 148-151.

25 Jacques Maritain, "Chronique de la Quinzaine: Georges Rouault," *La Revue universelle* (May 15, 1924). Schloesser 235-238.

26 Maritain, "Chronique," 506; Schloesser 236. Emphasis added.

27 Jacques Maritain, *Art et scolastique* (Paris: Louis Rouart et Fils, 1927). The annex "Rouault" is found on pages 228-235; reprinted in *JRM-OC* 5:759-765.

28 Jacques Maritain, "Frontières de la poésie," *Art et scolastique* (1927) 143-187; reprinted in *JRM-OC* 5:685-817.

29 Jacques Maritain, *Frontières de la poésie et autres essais* (Paris: L. Rouart et fils, 1935).

30 *Années 30 en Europe: le temps menaçant 1929 1939: exposition du 20 février au 25 mai*, ed. Suzanne Pagé (Paris: Paris musées: Flammarion, 1997); *Max Beckmann and Paris: Matisse Picasso Braque Léger Rouault*, ed. Tobia Bezzola and Cornelia Homburg (St. Louis, MO: Saint Louis Art Museum; Zurich: Kunsthaus Zürich; Köln: Taschen, 1998). See esp. Fabrice Hergott, "With Rouault and Braque: On the

Inner Paths of Painting," trans. Brian Holmes, 107-32.

31 Maritain, *Frontières* 138.

32 Jacques Maritain, *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1953).

33 Jacques Maritain, Preface, *Rouault retrospective exhibition, 1953* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1953).

34 Maritain, *Creative Intuition* 224-225. Emphasis added.

35 Maritain's use of this phrase in 1953 very likely was meant to echo Allen Tate's essay "The Angelic Imagination: Poe as God," written in 1951 just after his formal conversion to Catholicism. Tate was drawing on the term Maritain had used in *The Dream of Descartes, together with some other essays*, trans. Mabelle L. Andison (New York: Philosophical Library, 1944). See Paul Giles's treatment of Maritain's influence on Tate's formulation of the analogical imagination in *American Catholic Arts and Fictions: Culture, Ideology, Aesthetics* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1992) 191-209. See also *Exiles and Fugitives: The Letters of Jacques and Raïssa Maritain, Allen Tate, and Caroline Gordon*, ed. John M. Dunaway (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1992).

36 Maritain, *Creative Intuition* 214, 219.

37 For consideration of individual figures within these categories, see Bernard Doering, "*Lacrimae Rerum*—Tears at the Heart of Things: Jacques Maritain and Georges Rouault," *Truth Matters: Essays in Honor of Jacques Maritain*, ed. John G. Trapani, Jr. (Washington, D.C.: American Maritain Association; Distributed by The Catholic Univ. of America Press, 2004) 204-233. See esp. 213-223.

38 Jacques Maritain, *The Degrees of Knowledge*, trans. Bernard Wall and Margot R. Adamson (New York: Scribner, 1938); orig. *Distinguer pour unir; ou, Les degrés du savoir* (Paris: Desclée, de Brouwer et cie, 1932); reprinted in *JRM-OC* 4:255-1110.

39 Maritain, "For an Existential Epistemology: No Knowledge without Intuitivity," *Untrammeled Approaches,* 326.

40 Giuseppi Machiori, *Georges Rouault*, (Paris/Lausanne: Bibliothèque des Arts, 1965) 30.

Creating Rouault's Legacy, 1945–1965: Commander in the Légion d'honneur, Artist of Catholic Modernity

Sheila Nowinski

Georges Rouault enjoyed a remarkable surge in transatlantic popularity during the post-war decade. In 1945, the Museum of Modern Art in New York mounted its first retrospective exhibition in which 161 paintings, graphic works, and tapestries were presented. In 1947, New York saw yet another exhibition, this one at the Pierre Matisse Gallery. In 1951, on the occasion of his eightieth birthday, the Fourth Republic made Rouault a commander of France's Légion d'honneur. That same year, the Centre catholique des intellectuels français sponsored a conference on Rouault at which Abbé Maurice Morel premiered his documentary *Miserere*.

In 1952, a major Rouault retrospective toured Brussels, Amsterdam, and the Musée d'Art Moderne in Paris; it was a critical and public success in all three cities. In 1953, the exhibition traveled to the United States where it was shown at the Cleveland Museum of Art, the County Museum of Art of Los Angeles, and the Museum of Modern Art in the New York (for whose catalogue Jacques Maritain wrote the preface[1]). The show then went on to Japan—whose American occupation had only ended the previous year (April 1952)—first to the National Museum of Tokyo, then to the Municipal Museum of Osaka. These honors and accolades for Rouault in the 1950s signaled not only the artist's popularity in France but also the esteem in which he was held by the postwar American and Japanese public.

In February 1958, when Georges Rouault died short of his eighty-seventh birthday, the French Fourth Republic (1946-1958) honored him with a state funeral held on the square of the ancient abbey church of Saint-Germain-des-Près. The French Republic's decision to honor Rouault might seem strange in light of the bitter Act of Separation that had divided church and state in France since 1905. However, in the years following World War II, Catholic and republican hostilities had subsided. On the one hand, Catholicism's anti-democratic politics had been discredited by the Vichy regime (July 1940-August 1944). On the other hand, the threat of Communism led former enemies to seek alliances with the Church. The 1940s and 1950s saw a broad revival of French Catholic life—in lay associations, the media, and politics. Christian imagery also became important in the United States as a response to the new Cold War with the Soviet Union. The widespread transatlantic recognition of Rouault's work, especially during the period 1945-1953, may be seen at least partially within this post-war context.

Beginning with the French defeat in 1940, Catholic institutions, associations, and devotions had moved to the center of French society after decades of self-segregation and anticlerical hostility.[2] In response to wartime hardship, many French men and women sought the familiar consolations of the Church.[3] Vichy's rhetoric and policies—intended to instill traditionalist, Christian morality—frequently benefited the Church and contributed to a rise in religious practice in some areas.[4] Between 1943 and 1948, for example, the traveling statue of "Notre-Dame de Boulogne" drew massive crowds throughout its tour of France.[5] Vichy's proselytizing atmosphere inspired the creation of the worker-priests in 1943.[6]

Nevertheless, many Catholics resented Vichy. During the regime, a federation of Catholic trade unions worked unsuccessfully to block the regime's prohibition of labor organizations.[7] A handful of Catholic resisters worked to disrupt German occupation and Vichy collaboration, to hide Jews, and to provide reconnaissance to the Allies.[8] At the Jesuit theologate of Fourvière, theologians contributed to the "spiritual resistance," publishing the clandestine *Témoignage chrétien* despite the protests of the Church hierarchy.[9] Just as the occupation reignited the decades old "*guerre franco-française*" between the French Right and Left, the war deepened theological and political rivalries among French Catholics.[10] John Milbank connects the politics and the theology:

> And it is vital to grasp that de Lubac's and [Yves] de Montcheuil's political opponents—Catholic Rightists supporting the Vichy regime and collaborating with the occupying Germans—were also their theological opponents, who reported what they regarded as dubious theological opinions as well as their dubious secular involvements back up the chains of Jesuit and Dominican command to Rome itself.[11]

In 1944, French Catholics who had participated in the Resistance were catapulted to national prominence. For the first time Christian Democrats rather than authoritarian Catholic integralists were the leading voices of French Catholicism. The Christian Democratic party Mouvement républicain populaire (MRP), founded on the principles of Resistance unity and cooperation with the parties of the Left, enjoyed electoral success.[12] The party also won the support of General de Gaulle and the United States, in no small part due to fears over the unprecedented popularity of the French Communist Party after the war. Domestically, the French Resistance was strongly linked with Communists; internationally, the USSR emerged from the World War as one of two superpowers. Catholic voters, historically supporters of right-wing nationalist parties, threw their support behind the Christian Democratic MRP in the immediate post-war years—Vichy collaboration had discredited any other alternatives.[13]

The wartime Catholic revival carried over to the post-war years, but with a different tone. In 1944, French Catholicism was reinvigorated by the ascension of a new generation of energetic Catholic activists—veterans of interwar Social Catholic and Christian Democratic groups who were eager to bring their faith to modern politics, social activism, and the media. Many Catholics had been encouraged by the endorsement of democracy in Pius XII's 1945 Christmas Allocution, the first such unequivocal embrace of its kind.[14] In France, many lay Catholics and clergy hoped to revitalize the Church with new social and pastoral initiatives, artistic programs, and theological currents.

In 1943, the first worker-priests took jobs at shipyards and on factory lines. They wanted to better understand the working class that was generally thought to have become irreligious in the nineteenth century (manifested nowhere so greatly as in the bloody final days of the Paris Commune).[15] By 1953, there were over one hundred worker-priests who, in addition to proselytizing, became outspoken critics of capitalism and the Cold War. They argued that the dechristianization of the working class was the result of capitalist exploitation. The priests were frequently active in trade

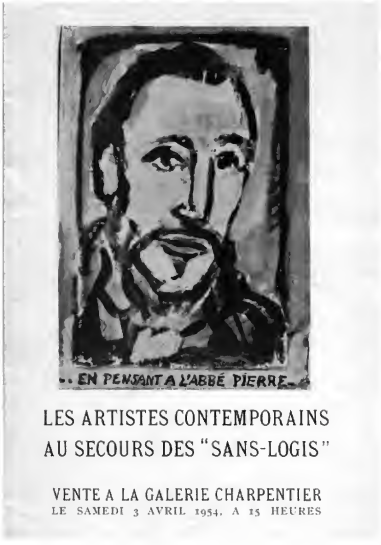


Fig. 1 Catalogue for "Contemporary Artists to the Aid of the Homeless" (April 3, 1954), a sale of works whose proceeds were donated to emergency housing. The cover featured Rouault's portrait entited, *...thinking of Abbé Pierre.* Photo courtesy of Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris.

Fig. 2 The popular French crooner, Charles Trenet, was the highest bidder at the charity auction, purchasing Rouault's portrait of Abbé Pierre for 1,750,000 francs. Photo courtesy of Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris.

unions, some joining the Communist-affiliated CGT (Confédération générale du travail). High-profile left-wing Catholic thinkers, like François Mauriac and Emmanuel Mounier, hailed these efforts to form Christian communities in the working class milieu.[16] Dominican priest Maurice Montuclard headed another Catholic initiative in the working class, the Jeunesse de l'église. Montuclard intended to create a Christian presence among the working class and was less interested in evangelizing the masses. According to Montuclard, Marxist theory was a scientific reality with which the Church had to reconcile: the Church, he argued, must engage in the proletariat's struggle for liberation.[17]

Unlike earlier periods of energetic Catholic activity and missionary work, in the 1940s and 1950s French Catholics and their organizations were visible forces in mainstream French society. In 1944, Hubert Beuve-Méry, Catholic and Christian Democrat, founded *Le Monde* that quickly became, and remains, France's leading daily newspaper.[18]

In 1952, the story of the worker-priests was popularized by the best-selling novel by Gilbert Cesbron, *Les saints vont en enfer* (The Saints Go into Hell), while the missionary efforts of the worker-priests drew national media attention.[19] On February 1, 1954, Abbé Pierre's famous radio appeal to aid homeless persons freezing to death in the streets of Paris during the bitter winter made him one of the most popular figures in France.[20] (Georges Rouault produced a portrait of Abbé Pierre in the winter of 1954 [**figs. 1** and **2**]). Catholic trade unions represented hundreds of thousands of workers, and Catholic youth and student associations flourished, supported by the post-war baby boom.[21]

In addition to these socio-political movements, the world of arts and culture also underwent a change. Within the Church, the war's destruction had provided a material catalyst: between 1945 and 1960, four thousand damaged churches were reconstructed in France. Dominican Fr. Marie-Alain Couturier and his colleagues at the journal

l'Art sacré led efforts to introduce modern art into Catholic worship spaces. This was a reversal of Couturier's own pre-war views. In the 1930s, the priest had rejected modern art, arguing that contemporary works, particularly abstract art, failed to bring the viewer into tranquil communion with God's creation.[22] Even Rouault did not escape Couturier's pre-war condemnations: the Dominican insisted Rouault's paintings were full of "extremes and brutality" that alienated worshipers.[23]

However, the war changed Couturier's estimation of what constituted authentic religious art, and he now argued that the minimalism of much of modern art was akin to the asceticism of the Gospel and the saints.[24] More controversial, however, was Couturier's new conviction that those outside the Catholic faith—non-practicing Catholics, Protestants, Jews, even atheists and Communists—could produce religious art for Catholic worship. This principle guided Couturier's work on the refurbishment of Notre-Dame-de-Toute-Grâce at Assy, which included stained glass windows by Rouault, as well as a mural by Jewish artist Marc Chagall, and a mosaic by Communist Fernand Léger. Couturier's other refurbishment projects included Le-Sacré-Coeur at Audincourt and la Chapelle du Rosaire at Vence.[25] To a great extent, it was *l'Art Sacré* that created Rouault as a "Catholic painter" in the post-war era.[26]

Outside the Church, Catholic themes also permeated film and music. In the 1940s and 1950s, French cinema produced a number of religious-themed films, among the most popular being *Monsieur Vincent* (1947), a biography of St. Vincent de Paul. Georges Rouquier's documentary, *Lourdes et ses miracles* (Lourdes and its Miracles [1955]), winner of the Prix Spécial du Jury at Tours, had originally been intended to be a short thirty-minute piece for the Church. In Rouquier's hands, it ended up becoming a ninety-minute classic in the history of documentary film.[27] Director Robert Bresson articulated the themes of interwar Catholic Revivalism in a new cinematic context: *Les Anges du péché* (The Angels of Sin [1943]); *Les Dames du Bois du Boulogne* (The Ladies of the Night of the Bois de Boulogne [1945]); *Un cCndamné à mort s'est échappé* (A Condemned Prisoner Has Escaped [1956]); *Pickpocket* (1959); and *Le Procès de Jeanne d'Arc* (Trial of Joan of Arc [1962]).[28] Bresson's oeuvre also includes two adaptations of the works by Catholic novelist Georges Bernanos: *Journal d'un curé de campagne* (Diary of a Country Priest [1951]), winner of the Golden Lion at the twelfth annual Venice International Film Festival); and *Mouchette* (1966).[29]

Georges Bernanos's works also proved an inspiration to composers. His play *Dialogues of the Carmelites* was adapted as an opera by composer Francis Poulenc.[30] The play and opera were loosely based on historical events—the execution of sixteen Carmelite nuns during the French Revolution. The opera's debut in Paris in 1957 was met with critical and public acclaim.[31] The opera's final scene depicts the nuns' beheading: they march to the guillotine singing the hymn to the Virgin Mary, *Salve Regina*; while ominous unpredictable thumps signal the plunge of the falling blade. In the opera, the nuns' martyrdom seems both sublime and grotesque, conforming to the *renouveau catholique* aesthetic extending back at least to Joris-Karl Huysmans.[32] Poulenc's *Stabat Mater* (1950-51) and Maurice Duruflé's *Requiem* (1947) are other post-war works that remain popular today.

The most notable post-war Catholic Revivalist composer was Olivier Messiaen, whose most productive period occurred during the 1940s and early-1950s.[33] His compositions blurred the line between liturgical and concert music. In April 1945, Messiaen debuted *Trois petites liturgies de la Présence divine* (Three Small Liturgies of the Divine Presence), a deeply religious work that followed closely on his wartime *Quartet for the End of Time* (premiered in a prisoner of war camp [1941][34]), *Visions of Amen* (1942), and *Twenty Gazes on the Infant Jesus* (1944); it would be followed by the *Mass of Pentecost* (premiered 1951). Messiaen's propensity for lengthy theological explanations of his works led to an attack on him by critics that became known as "The Messiaen Case," catalyzed by the 1945 debut of the *Three Small Liturgies*.[35] Messiaen spent part of the summer of 1949 at Tanglewood, summertime home of the Boston Symphony. The *Turangalîla-Symphonie*, commissioned by Serge Koussevitzky, was given its first performance on December 2,

1949 at Boston's Symphony Hall by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Leonard Bernstein.[36] In all his works, Messiaen was fascinated with time and duration, representing eternal, divine truths within temporal compositions.[37]

In the world of ideas, the quest for the eternal as expressed in the ever-changing temporal world was also central, manifesting itself especially in Catholic theological debates of the 1940s and 1950s. Already in the 1930s, Dominican theologian Marie-Dominique Chenu had begun advancing a historicist approach to scholasticism at the seminary Le Saulchoir.[38] Chenu argued that the Church and its doctrine did not exist outside of time but evolved continuously.[39] Chenu's Dominican colleague and student Yves Congar laid a foundation for Catholic ecumenicalism by offering historical accounts of Christian schisms and expressing appreciation for the particularities of other Christian denominations.[40]

At the Jesuit theologate Fourvière in Lyon, too, a movement formed around Henri de Lubac's explorations of Catholicism's pre-scholastic, biblical, and patristic sources.[41] Like the Dominicans at Le Saulchoir, the Fourvière school was marked by a historicist critique of Church dogma as well as openness to ecumenical dialogue, including overtures to the East.[42] These theologians' apparent disregard for the neo-scholastic tradition—mandated by Leo XIII in 1879 as a response to nineteenth-century positivist assaults on the Church—earned their work the pejorative label "*nouvelle théologie*" (New Theology). Chenu, Congar, and de Lubac insisted that they had not created a new theology but were only returning to and retrieving early Christian sources, an endeavor they called *ressourcement*.[43]

1950–1958: Retrenchment in Church and State

In response to these new pastoral, cultural and intellectual currents, Rome enacted a series of disciplinary measures. The general reactionary tenor of the times is usually referred to by evoking the encyclical *Humani Generis*, issued by Pope Pius XII in August 1950. Aimed specifically at debates provoked by evolutionary biology's challenge to biblical accounts of the origin of the human species, the encyclical had a ripple effect that dampened post-war Catholic energies and led to a crackdown on theological heterodoxy.[44]

In 1950, de Lubac's Jesuit superiors barred him from teaching in Lyon's seminary and Catholic faculty and his books were removed from their libraries.[45] In 1954, the French Dominicans were subject to disciplinary action by Rome and their provincial was replaced by an appointee—an unprecedented action. Chenu was removed from his teaching position in Paris and sent to Rouen, and Congar was likewise barred from teaching and publishing.[46] As Étienne Fouilloux observes, "Even Jacques Maritain, the veritable prototype of the 'Catholic intellectual' of the 20th century, barely escaped ecclesiastical censure in the course of the 1950s."[47]

The suppression of de Lubac and the Dominicans reverberated outside Catholic seminaries.[48] Dominican Fr. Couturier came under fire for his projects in religious art and critics deplored his churches' blend of artistic styles and unconventional representations. In 1950, Couturier's collaborator Fr. Régamey organized an exhibition of modern religious art. The show was greeted coldly in Rome, particularly by Cardinal Celso Constantini, Pius XII's president of the Pontifical Commission for Sacred Art. (The exhibit featured a number of pieces by Rouault, as well as abstract works by Alfred Manessier and Georges Braque.) In 1951, the bishop of Annecy demanded that Germaine Richier's Christ (commissioned by Fr. Couturier) be removed from Notre-Dame-de-Toute-Grâce because, he argued, the rutted sculpture did not appear to be human.[49] In 1952, the Pontifical Commission for Sacred Art issued instructions restating the Church's rejection of modern art and architecture.[50]

The French Dominicans, prominent in the contentious worker-priest movement, were barred from any further participation with the group. The remaining worker-priests were severely restricted in 1953.[51] In 1955, the Vatican condemned the Jeunesse de l'église, Dominican Maurice Montuclard's movement for Catholic-Marxist cooperation, and added its publications to the Index of Forbidden Books.[52] To many French Catholics, the gulf

between the Church and the proletariat appeared to be widening in the 1950s.

Retrenchment was also occurring in the political realm as the Fourth Republic reluctantly dealt with the reality of decolonization. In Indochina, the French suffered a devastating defeat at the battle of Dien Bien Phu (13 March – 7 May 1954). In June, the government resigned and Pierre Mendès-France was elected. As early as 1950, Mendès-France "had posed the choice in unequivocal terms—tripling of troops and funds, or negotiate with Ho Chi Minh."[53] He now negotiated a complete withdrawal of French forces at the Geneva Conference (8 May – 21 July 1954). Conservative nationalists reacted with hostility, directed anti-Semitic insults at Mendès-France, and asserted that Vietnamese Catholics could not be allowed to fall into Communist hands. This last was an argument that Americans would also use as they gradually inserted themselves into what eventually became the Vietnam War, supporting Ngo Dinh Diem because he successfully sold himself as a Catholic who would make a better leader than non-Christian Buddhists.[54]

Just as French involvement in Indochina came to an end in the summer of 1954, an even greater decolonization war was about to begin on the first of November later that year—the "Red All Saints Day." As Todd Shepard argues, "the Algerian Revolution was the crucial conflict for French people over the shape and meaning of France in the post-1945 era."[55] This brutal period would become known for guerrilla warfare, terrorism, counter-terrorism, and—most infamously, on account of the writings of Franz Fanon, Albert Camus, and Jean-Paul Sartre—torture.[56] There were Catholics on the Left who spoke out against the methods: "the harrowing testimony of Jean Muller, a former lorry driver killed in the fighting, was published by the *Cahiers du témoignage chrétien* on February 15, 1957; the Comité de résistance spirituelle published a collection of eyewitness accounts, *Des rappelés témoignent* (The Recalled Testify [1957]), in March."[57] However, a reorganized Catholic integralist right had also coalesced around the defense of the French Algeria and militant anti-Communism. These integralists were determined to maintain *l'Algérie française* at any cost.[58] By the time the Fourth Republic was dissolved in late 1958, French politics were far removed from the aspirations of Liberation a decade earlier.

1954–1965: Ends of Eras, New Beginnings

Rouault was an important figure in post-war Franco-American cultural exchange, garnering critical and popular acclaim from American audiences. The 1945, 1947, and 1953 New York exhibitions coincided with a period of American fascination with France. Paris in particular was considered the European center of free, cosmopolitan, and sophisticated culture.[59] The MGM film musical *An American in Paris*, directed by Vincente Minnelli and released in 1951, was nominated for eight Academy Awards including the award for Best Picture (which it won). In 1958, *Gigi* won nine Academy Awards, including both Best Picture and one for Minnelli as Best Director.

Political leaders had their own reasons for promoting French art: politicians and diplomats in the United States and France hoped that exposure and familiarity to French culture would cement public support for the transatlantic alliance and economic aid.[60] Further, Rouault's Christian imagery dovetailed with a religious resurgence in America, one of whose self-expressions was a string of biblical epic movies: *The Robe* (1953); *The Ten Commandments* (1956); *Ben-Hur* (1959).[61] His status as a Catholic artist (at least in the public's view) complemented Cold War rhetoric that pitted the Christian West against the atheist, Communist Eastern Bloc.[62] In both the United States and France, anti-Communism brought Catholics into alliances with former adversaries—American Protestants and liberals and French secular republicans.[63]

In France, Rouault's popularity paralleled continued public interest in religious intellectual culture. Despite the Vatican's efforts in 1950 and beyond, new theological currents did in fact reach French readers. Fr. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, who had been barred from publishing his controversial meditations on Christianity, temporality, and science during his lifetime, arranged to have the legal rights to his work assigned outside the Jesuit Order. Soon after he died in his New York City exile

on Easter Sunday, April 1955, the posthumous publication of *The Phenomenon of Man* (1955) was an immediate success. The rest of his works were published soon after, along with numerous translations, including English, German, and Russian.[64] Nor could the Vatican's suppression of historicist examinations of scripture and early Christianity quell interest. Biblical scripture and criticism were widely available to the French public in the 1950s: both Cardinal Liénart's new translation of the Bible (1951) and Sorbonne professor Jean Guitton's works on the historical origins of Christianity were best-sellers.[65] This interest in primitive Christianity—among theologians and the public alike—may have brought new attention to Rouault's depictions of early Christians (like Veronica) while fascination with the historical figure of Jesus Christ may have created a new audience for Rouault's images of Christ as a suffering man.

Georges Rouault died in February 1958. His state funeral was held in the midst of a growing crisis in the government of the Fourth Republic over the Algerian War. Neither Rouault nor his work spoke to these controversies directly, but his alternative Catholic expression—one not necessarily sanctioned by the Church establishment—may have appealed to French Catholics disillusioned with the Church and in particular its refusal to address renewed right-wing Catholic politics. For these Catholics, Rouault's funeral may have been seen as an opportunity to reassert their vision of the Church—one comprised of an assertive and independent laity and dedicated to democratic politics.

By spring the political crisis in France had come to a head. Pressures from the Right and confusion on the Left forced the Prime Minister, Christian Democrat Pierre Pflimlin, to resign in May 1958. His departure was followed by General de Gaulle's appointment, on the condition that he would have full emergency powers and that the constitution would be revised. In September 1958, a new constitution was overwhelmingly endorsed by a national referendum. The Fourth Republic was dissolved; the Fifth Republic was inaugurated.[66]

Autumn 1958 was also the start of a new era in the Vatican. Pope Pius XII died on October 9, 1958, ending a period of cautious conservatism in the Catholic hierarchy. Less than a year later, Pius's successor John XXIII surprised the Church with the proclamation of the Second Vatican Council, intended to update Canon Law.[67] In 1960, the Vatican Museum opened a section dedicated to modern art; two years later an exhibition featured, among other works, seven pieces by Rouault. "This ensemble," reported *l'Art Sacré*, "was particularly adapted in order to initiate foreign visitors to the painting of ROUAULT."[68]

In 1963, John XXIII died and was succeeded by Paul VI who had been influenced in his youth by the writings of Jacques Maritain. Paul shared Maritain's affection for modern religious art in general and for the art of Rouault in particular. In 1964, the pope addressed modern artists: "our ministry requires your collaboration for, as you well know, we must render the ineffability of God both accessible and comprehensible. You are the masters in this operation which delivers the invisible world in accessible, intelligible forms. This is your vocation, your mission.... Without your aid, the ministry sways and stammers, uncertain."[69] In 1973, the Collection of Modern and Contemporary Religious Art was inaugurated by Paul VI in the Borgia Apartment.

By the time the Council finally concluded in 1965, the Church had thoroughly revised its relationship to modernity,[70] and this new attitude was reflected in an openness to the aesthetic Rouault had embodied for over half a century. On 8 December 1965, the official conclusion of the Council, the bishops addressed themselves to contemporary artists by situating the function of fine arts within the mid-twentieth-century context of anxiety, atheism, and existentialism.[71] "This world in which we live needs beauty in order not to sink into despair. Beauty, like truth, brings joy to the human heart and is that precious fruit which resists the erosion of time, which unites generations and enables them to be one in admiration!"[72]

This is the era in which Rouault could finally be—and indeed, became—imagined as a "Catholic artist" within the Catholic Church. The relationship was reciprocal: without Rouault, it seems unlikely that the Catholic Church could have

been imagined as an institution that valued the "modern." In 1945, year zero for the post-war era, Abbé Morel had underscored the essential role that Rouault would play in Catholicism's struggles to come to terms with modernity: "For an immense crowd that looks at us from the outside, Rouault is the only painter who is able to assure them that the Catholic Church has lost nothing of that which it might offer to the world of the 20th cetury..."[73]

Endnotes

1 Pierre Courthion, *Georges Rouault* (New York: Harry N. Abrams Publishers, 1962) 301-302; *Rouault Retrospective Exhibition* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1953).

2 W. D. Halls, *Politics, Society and Christianity in Vichy France* (London: Berg Publishers, 1995) 14-27, 49, 87. On French Catholics' insulated network of social service, cultural, and educational organizations in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries see, for example Joseph F. Byrnes, *Catholic And French Forever: Religious And National Identity in Modern France* (University Park, PA: Penn State Press, 2005); Laura Lee Downs, *Childhood in the Promised Land: Working-Class Movements and the Colonies de Vacances in France, 1880-1960* (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2002).

3 Étienne Fouilloux, *Les Chrétiens français entre crise et libération: 1937- 1947* (Paris: Seuil, 1997) 256-257; Halls 385. Emmanuel Godin, however, offers a note of caution to temper Fouilloux's claims: "Thus, it is tempting to conflate this Catholic *élan* with the political renaissance following the dark years of the Occupation. However, this manifest post-war 'Catholic revival' should not mask the fact that preceding years were, in no sense, a time of Catholic desolation; therefore, the Catholic buoyancy characterizing the post-war period should be treated with caution and its originality put into a wider perspective." Godin, "French Catholic Intellectuals and the Nation in Post-War France," *South Central Review* 17/4 (Winter 2000): 45-60, see p. 47.

4 Halls 38-40, 288, 385. See also Robert O. Paxton, *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order, 1940-1944* (1972; New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1982).

5 Louis Pérouas, "Le Grand Retour de Notre-Dame de Boulogne à travers la France (1943-1948)," *Annales de Bretagne et des Pays de l'Ouest* (1983): 171-183.

6 Émile Poulat, *Naissance des prêtres ouvriers* (Paris: Casterman, 1965).

7 Halls 247-256.

8 Fouilloux, *Les Chrétiens français entre crise et liberation* 99-147, 226; Halls 199-220.

9 François Bédarida and Renée Bédarida, *La Résistance spirituelle, 1941-1944: les cahiers clandestins du Témoignage chrétien* (Paris: Michel, 2001); Bernard Comte, "Jésuites lyonnais résistants," *Les jésuites à Lyon XVIe-XXe siècle*, eds. Étienne Fouilloux and Bernard Hours (Lyon: ENS Éditions, 2005): 189-204; Henri de Lubac, *Christian Resistance to Anti-Semitism: Memories from 1940-1944*, trans. Elizabeth Englund (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990), orig. *Résistance chrétienne à l'antisémitisme* (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1988).

10 Henri Rousso describes the Second World War in France as a civil war: "la guerre franco-francaise." Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France since 1944,* trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1991) 4.

11 John Milbank, *The Suspended Middle: Henri de Lubac and the Debate concerning the Supernatural* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 2005) 3; in Stephen Schloesser, "Against Forgetting: Memory, History, Vatican II," *Vatican II: Did Anything Happen?*, ed. David G. Schultenover (New York: Continuum, 2007) 92-158, see p. 128. Yves de Montcheuil, a friend of Henri de Lubac, was a Jesuit priest executed by the Gestapo on 10 August 1944.

12 Laurent Ducerf, "Le Congrès fondateur de MRP des 25 et 26 novembre 1944," *Chrétiens et sociétés, XVI^e^-XX^e^ siècles*, no. 12 (2005): 97-107.

13 Pierre Letamendia, *Le Mouvement républicain populaire: le MRP, histoire d'un grand parti français* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1995).

14 Schloesser, "Against Forgetting" 118.

15 See Owen Chadwick, *The Secularization of the European Mind in the 19th Century* (1975; New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2000) 48-139.

16 Jean-Pierre Rioux, *The Fourth Republic, 1944-1958*, trans. Godfrey Rogers (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1987) 428. For Mounier, see also Joseph Anthony Amato, *Mounier and Maritain: A French Catholic Understanding of the Modern World* (1975; Ypsilanti, MI: Sapientia Press, 2002); Michel Winock, *"Esprit": Des intellectuels dans la cité, 1930-1950* (1975; Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1996). For both Mauriac and Mounier see Godin, "French Catholic Intellectuals" 49-51, 54-55.

17 Thierry Keck, *Jeunesse de l'église: 1936-1955. Aux Sources de la crise progressiste en France* (Paris: Karthala, 2004).

18 Laurent Greilsamer, *Hubert Beuve-Méry: 1902-1989* (Paris: Fayard, 1990).

19 Gilbert Cesbron, *Les saints vont en enfer* (Paris: R. Laffont, 1952). See Oscar L. Arnal, *Priests in Working-Class Blue: The History of the Worker-Priests, 1945-1954* (New York: Paulist Press, 1986).

20 On abbé Pierre see Gérard Cholvy and Yves Marie Hilaire, *La France religieuse: 1945-1975* (Toulouse: Privat, 2002) 34-36.

21 Cholvy and Hilaire 29-31.

22 Aidan Nichols, "The French Dominicans and the Journal *l'Art Sacré*," *New Blackfriars* 88/1013 (January 2007): 25-45, see pp. 32-35.

23 Qtd. in Nichols 34.

24 Nichols 39.

25 Nichols 32, 40.

26 For Rouault in postwar issues of *l'Art Sacré* see: Abbé Maurice Morel, "Constance du Génie français," *l'Art Sacré* 2 (1945): 28; Morel, "Rouault parmi nous," *l'Art Sacré* 3 (1945): 5-6, 8; "Pour un art religieux," *l'Art Sacré* 7 (August-September 1946): 11-12; "Témoignages sur le *Miserere*," *l'Art Sacré* 7-8 (March-April 1952): 23-26. Rouault's own short testimonial to the deceased Couturier appeared in "L'adieu de ses amis, les artistes," *l'Art Sacré* 7-8 (March-April 1954): 6. There is a significant gap between 1954 and 1963 during which Rouault is mentioned only occasionally and briefly; the gap corresponds to the years between the Vatican crackdown following *Humani Generis* (1950) and the papal election of Paul VI in 1963. See "Georges Rouault par Pierre Courthion," *l'Art Sacré* 9-10 (May-June 1963): 29; the entire issue devoted to Rouault, *l'Art Sacré* 5-6 (January-February 1964); "ROUAULT, peintures inconnues ou célèbres," *l'Art Sacré* 7-8 (March-April 1965): 22, 25; and a review of Giuseppe Marchiori's *Georges Rouault* (Paris-Lausanne: Bibliothèque des arts, 1965), "Un nouveau livre sur Rouault," *l'Art Sacré* 5-6 (January-February 1966): 31. *L'Art Sacré* ceased publication in 1969.

27 Rouquier's work has recently become available again on DVD. For production details and an excerpt from André Bazin review of the film in *France-Observateur* (24 November 1955) see: www.lesdocs.com/fiches/lourdes.htm. Accessed May 18, 2008.

28 Cholvy and Hilaire 47-48; Joseph E. Cunneen, *Robert Bresson: A Spiritual Style in Film* (New York: Continuum, 2003); Michel Estève, *Robert Bresson: La Passion du cinématographe* (Paris: Albatros, 1983).

29 For Georges Bernanos's novel, *Journal d'un curé de campagne*, see Stephen Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism: Mystic Modernism in Postwar Paris, 1919-1933* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 2005) 245-281.

30 Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 307, 322.

31 Benjamin Ivry, *Francis Poulenc* (London: Phaidon, 1996) 169-192.

32 Wilfrid Mellers, *Francis Poulenc* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1993) 127; Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 41-45.

33 Paul Griffiths, *Olivier Messiaen and the Music of Time* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 1985) 108. The 2008 centennial year of Messiaen's birth has spurred the publication of a number of works. See for example: Vincent P. Benitez *Olivier Messiaen: A Research and Information guide* (New York: Routledge, 2008); Christopher Dingle, *The Life of Messiaen* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2007); *Olivier Messiaen: Music, Art and Literature*, eds. Christopher Dingle and Nigel Simeone (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2007); *Messiaen Studies*, ed. Robert Sholl (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2007); Siglind Bruhn, *Messiaen's Contemplations of Covenant and Incarnation: Musical Symbols of Faith*

in the Two Great Piano Cycles of the 1940s (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2007).

34 Rebecca Rischin, *For the End of Time: The Story of the Messiaen Quartet* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 2003).

35 For an exhaustive study see Lilise Boswell-Kurc, "Olivier Messiaen's Religious War-time Works and their Controversial Reception in France (1941-46)," diss., New York Univ. (New York: New York Univ., 2001). See also Peter Hill and Nigel Simeone, *Messiaen* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 2005) 142-167.

36 Hill and Simeone, *Messiaen* 193.

37 Griffiths 119, 18. See also Stephen Schloesser, "The Charm of Impossibilities: Mystic Surrealism as Contemplative Voluptuousness," *Messiaen the Theologian*, ed. Andrew Shenton (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2009).

38 Étienne Fouilloux, *Une Église en quête de liberté: La Pensée catholique française entre modernisme et Vatican II, 1914-1962* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1998) 129-140; Thomas O'Meara, "Raid on the Dominicans': The Repression of 1954," *America* 170, no. 4 (February 5, 1994): 8ff.

39 Fouilloux, *Une Église en quête de liberté* 138-140. On temporality in twentieth-century Catholic thought see Schloesser, "Against Forgetting" 122-138; and Schloesser, "*Vivo ergo cogito*: Modernism as Temporalization and its Discontents: A Propaedeutic to This Collection," *The Reception of Pragmatism in France and the Rise of Catholic Modernism, 1890-1914*, ed. David G. Schultenover (Washington, D.C.: Catholic Univ. of America Press, forthcoming).

40 Fouilloux, *Une Église en quête de liberté* 140-146; O'Meara 8ff.

41 Fouilloux, *Une Église en quête de liberté* 183-191; Schloesser, "Against Forgetting" 127-130. See: Henri de Lubac, *Catholicisme: les aspects sociaux du dogme* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1938); de Lubac, *Corpus mysticum: l'eucharistie et l'église au Moyen Âge. Étude historique*, 2nd ed., rev. and enlarged (Paris: Aubier, 1944); de Lubac, *Surnaturel: études historiques* ed. Montaigne (Paris: Aubier, 1946); de Lubac, *Exégèse médiévale: les quatre sens de l'Écriture*, 4 vols. (Paris: Aubier, 1954-1964).

42 Henri de Lubac, *Aspects du bouddhisme* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1951); de Lubac, *La rencontre du bouddhisme et de l'Occident* (Paris: Aubier, 1952).

43 Fouilloux, *Une Église en quête de liberté* 194. For Leo XIII's neo-scholastic mandate of 1879, see Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 33-35.

44 Fouilloux, *Une Église en quête de liberté* 292; Cholvy and Hilaire 68-69.

45 Fouilloux, *Une Église en quête de liberté* 290-294; and Schloesser, "Against Forgetting" 129. According to Fouilloux, there is some debate on the role of *Humani Generis* in the disciplinary action taken against de Lubac.

46 O'Meara 8ff; Fouilloux, *Une Église en quête de liberté* 294-300.

47 Étienne Fouilloux, "'Intellectuels catholiques'? Réflexions sur une naissance différée," *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire* 53 (January-March 1997): 13-24, at 23; citing Jean-Dominique Durand, "La grande attaque de 1956," *Cahiers Jacques Maritain* 30 (1995): 2-31.

48 O'Meara 8ff.

49 Cholvy and Hilaire 44-46.

50 Nichols 36-40.

51 Poulat 162-163; Rioux 428-29; O'Meara 8ff.

52 Keck 371-402.

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Rouault's Faces of Christ: Notes for a Pictorial Contemplation

Nora Possenti Ghiglia

For Christ plays in ten thousand places,
Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his
To the Father through the features of men's faces.
—Gerard Manley Hopkins[1]

I. The Expressive Power of the Human Face

In Rouault's paintings, many threads are connected by a profound poetic unity: the poor and the humble, the rich and the presumptuous, prostitutes, circus performers, people and scenes from courts of law, grotesque types, landscapes, flowers, gentle feminine figures, motherhood, sacred objects. One theme recurs among them all that reveals their inspirational depth: the face of Christ which, albeit not more frequent in number, forcefully asserts itself for its inexhaustible expressive power and unique significance. It is a face marked by grandeur and sorrow, touched as it is by the light of glory, and its spiritual majesty affects all pictorial renderings and makes more explicit the religious tension that exists even in the artist's secular subjects. The writer André Suarès recognized the religious trait of his friend and in 1922 wrote to him: "Never smother the mystical song that burns deep within you....You can achieve what has not been done for a very long time: religious landscape....The mystical landscape—no painter has succeeded in this for centuries; not since Rembrandt."[2]

Rouault's paintings have a religious quality, but not in the sense that holy subjects prevail or that they are "church paintings"; on the contrary, his work, varied and diverse as it is, has a symphonic character. Its overall unity harmonizes original and different motifs, and among them the face of Christ is like a recurrent musical theme that stirs vibrations and unexpected heart beats. Art and faith are fused in the features he gives to Christ, just as they cohabit in his own life as a solitary artist whose greatness does not clash with the humility of the faithful.

Rouault depicted in an extraordinary way the drama of the human condition just as he sensitively interpreted humanity's longing for the infinite. He developed over the years a poetry of color and of light that moves from darkness to splendor, from torment and rebellion to peace and appeasement. Having experienced poverty (often extreme poverty) first-hand for most of his first forty-five years of life, he felt very deep bonds with humanity on the margins. All this transpires from the beautiful preface he wrote for the 1926 monograph that Georges Charensol dedicated to him:

> I am the silent friend of those who struggle in the empty furrow, I am the ivy of eternal misery which attaches itself to the leprous wall behind which rebellious humanity hides its vices and virtues. Being Christian in such precarious times, I believe only in Jesus on the cross. I am a Christian of times past [Chrétien des temps anciens].[3]

In Rouault there is nothing anecdotal or merely descriptive: the figures, the forms, even the scenes and the architectural constructions of his pictures go beyond the particular; they are intensely evocative and suggest another more essential and universal dimension. The spatial dimensions of his painting thus become like an interior space, filled with several meanings. The laws of perspective are subjected to the creative vision of the artist and not to real ones. Color produces a chromatic texture which gets its inspiration from nature, but has no natural elements: it is transfigured by the light that goes over it.

A similar transformation takes place in his renderings of the human face: traits are clear, and forms, shaped by black lines, are not abstractions but rather reduced to their essential elements; flesh hues often tend to tones that are opaque and almost brown or are changed into the most delicate and luminous tints. The signs and colors framing those faces emphasize their centrality and suggest an emotional and poetic content that cannot be reduced to an immediate perception. As a result, associating a face with one person or another is no longer of primary importance.

Rouault was attracted to the expressive power of the human face, not just for its intrinsic malleability, but also for the interior depth it can reveal as mirror of the soul and of God himself:

> As I better penetrated the heart of my pictorial passion, I sensed darker and more severe form, the urge to portray more simply. It is in this sense that I understand religious effort (inspiration). At that time, the human face represented for some only a type of official Salon portrait and for others it had little interest at all. However, I myself felt it an infinite source of means for expression of incomparable richness.[4]

In Rouault's work there is an exceptional gallery of faces that the painter studies, not with the curiosity of someone attracted by unusual qualities and notable individuals, or as someone who intends to investigate someone's psychology and habits with the aim of making a satire or a parody. Rather, he looks at them with deep-felt participation and even gentle compassion, especially when they show evidence that harsh life, or sin itself, has left its mark upon them; or he may express bitter sarcasm if he detects signs of presumption and arrogant pride.

He painted faces of unique intensity and beauty, masterpieces like *The Old King* (1937) of the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh; *Sarah* (1956, **no. 70**); *Veronica* (ca. 1945, **no. 67**); *The Apprentice-Worker* (ca. 1925, that suggests a self-portrait); *Monsieur X* (1911) of the Albright Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo, New York; *The Old Clown* (1917–20); and *The Last Romantic* (1937, **no. 50**). In oil paintings, the materials assume a tactile thickness that makes the surface look almost like a sculpture upon which light creates color vibrations and transparencies of great beauty. This play of light gives these faces a range of rare expressive power.

True portraits are less common, but they also have a dimension that is more ethical than subjective. Physiognomies may be precise (as in the portraits in *Souvenirs intimes* [Personal Remembrances, 1926])[5] and subjects may be strongly characterized, but they still suggest humanity's

universal grandeur and the secret essence carried within.

What the painter wrote to Pierre Matisse, the painter's son, about *the* enigmatic and suggestive face of *Monsieur X,* may be applied to other individuals he painted, since it allows a glimpse into the intuitive emotions that compelled him to create, while developing his own manner to interpret and portray the human face:

> You are too inquisitive in asking me if "Monsieur X" exists and if he posed for me—He exists for all eternity, he is reborn when he is thought to be dead.
>
> It is in order to forget "Monsieur X" (to whom I had not yet given birth pictorially but who haunted my mind) that I have been painting, since 1897, crucifixions, flagellations and sometimes poor clowns, prostitutes, and certain derelicts of humanity, diverse and varied landscapes. [...]
>
> An image is born through rendering on a canvas. For centuries to follow critics or oracle content themselves with various interpretations so that pictorially it takes on a gift of life.
>
> All see therein or believe to see therein what they want to. Oh, smile of the Mona Lisa.[6]

Every work "that has some gift of life," i.e. that can convincingly express the artist's creative intuition, has within itself an interpretative power of reality and a plurality of meanings that no critic can ever deplete. When the human figure is represented, that power is multiplied: the face's traits contain a concentration of passions, sentiments, thoughts, vices and virtues, misery and greatness, dreams and life experiences all interwoven and amplified. An extraordinary chart of human nature can be stamped in a face and the artist's intuition can penetrate and reveal it.

II. The Clown: Emblem of the Human Condition

For Rouault, there is a deep and endless connection between "the features of men's faces,"[7] mirrors of both good and bad in human nature, and the countenance of Christ. God reveals himself and he makes his goodness and mercy known through the Son, who came to wear frail flesh, vulnerable to pain and to death. The Son, in fact, "is image of the invisible God."[8] But if Christ has that unique face where his divinity joined human appearance in a precise historical moment, resemblance to God is impressed in every person created in God's image. In spite of the ugliness and miseries of sin, that seal remains forever in everyone who walks the tormented roads of the world, in the same way that divine mercy and Christ's tender compassion are always poured out upon poverty and sufferings. The painter's empathy for humanity is palpable in his subjects. Compassion does not judge; it looks to sin with sorrow and it grieves for all good things that are broken or lost:

> Deep in the eyes of the creature
> Most hostile
> A voice cries
> Deep in the eyes of the creature ungrateful
> Or impure
> Jesus, you still abide.[9]

One may ask if these considerations are valid when dealing with Rouault's clowns, if the clown is for him—as in the "commedia dell'arte"—a fixed type, or if the clown is a metaphor of the human condition. Another question may be asked: do his clowns cover themselves with a mask intended to be, in a classic sense, a feigned face that has its own expressive or scenic function (or a safety device to safeguard the unknown), or are their traits exemplary of human nature and the accumulation of feelings and passions that inhabit the heart of man?

These are not secondary questions if one considers the way in which the painter represents his clowns—unrelated to the typical circus folklore, but placed in an ideal abstraction that raises them to the level of symbols. At times, he presents them in

paintings where both background and still figures have a concentration of contrasting lines and dark strokes that imbues them with a highly dramatic quality; or—particularly in the works of his mature and late years—the clowns stand out in a complex balance of forms and rhythms, harmonized with ever-expanding colors. They can be isolated, or in groups of two or three, always statuesque, solid, with the monumentality of humble heroes. What attracted Rouault to the circus people was their humanity, their heritage of labor and sorrow, the bizarre and colorful costumes on which the light created for him pictorial suggestions of great depth: "Circus children, on your mutinous little faces, fearful or daring, light caresses form and magnifies it (*la lumière caresse la forme et la magnifie*)."[10]

Rouault's clowns are not examples of escape, but of life itself. They wear makeup, yet their humanity comes through in a wide range of sentiments: sadness and nostalgia, nobility and disenchantment, tenderness and compassion (as in *The Wounded Clown*, **no. 62**), and in certain cases detachment and supreme elegance. Rouault sees in the clown the emblem of the human condition and he makes him the pathetic symbol of those who bravely face the hard task of living. He chooses the clown as his "*compagnon d'élection*" (companion of choice).[11] The clown's mask is not a scenic one—it is the expression of the intimate reality of every single person.[12]

In *Cirque de l'Étoile filante* (The Shooting Star Circus, 1938, **nos. 45a–q**), a book of text and images dedicated to circus people, *Tristes os* (Weary Bones, **no. 45j**) is the name of a clown who is with Rouault when he has a long monologue, and with whom the painter feels a kind of common identity:

> Sad bones, my buddy, in the shadow of Jesus we are beaten dogs, faithful dogs; sometimes we bare our teeth for an instant, but immediately, [Paul] Verlaine, do you hear me, there we are adoring the Mother and Child.[13] (**nos. 60** and **79**)

The clown expresses the human condition and destiny, assuming its countenance in Christ's luminous shadow. It is no wonder, then, that François Mauriac wrote: "[Rouault's] clowns have the faces of Christ ravaged and sublime."[14]

III. In Search of the Holy Face of Christ

Throughout the ages, humanity has made countless attempts to go beyond our inadequacy in order to glimpse the mysterious forms of the Invisible and the Unimaginable. Already in ancient Egypt, we find in the Book of the Dead (chapter 125) this invocation to the divinity: "Here, I come to you. Let me contemplate your luminous beauty!" And, as if to reveal the insurmountable, the guide who introduces the worshiper to the holy sites has "the face covered by a thick veil."

"Your face, Oh Lord, I seek"[15] is a cry found throughout the Bible, expressing the longing that burns in the heart, inciting the human being to transcend oneself and walk toward the infinite "You"—"Your face"—to meet salvation.

Rouault picks up this century-old invocation and interprets it with rare effectiveness. The search for the semblance of God becomes for him the search for the features of Christ, since in him God has assumed human flesh. The theological reference that the painter appropriates—iconographically identifiable from the time of his first portrayals of the face of Christ, painted on the small cloths he preferred—recalls the scriptural passage in which Christ's human flesh is described as the veil that has opened the way to God's sanctuary, "the new and living way which he opened for us through the curtain."[16] The flesh *veils* the splendor of the divinity and relates it to us, while its *unveiling* makes it accessible to us. Christ covered himself with the veil of his humanity in order to take residence among us, and it is the suffering flesh of his crucified body that brings us to the love of the Father and of the Spirit. His arrival among us and his death have torn apart the ancient veil of the temple.

There is nothing devotional or conventional in Rouault's religious paintings, and the originality of their iconography shows undisputable theological depth. The primary sources of inspiration for Rouault's portrayals of Christ are certainly the biblical texts, from Isaiah to the narratives of his

passion and death found in the Gospels. His pictorial contemplation of the "man of sorrows well acquainted with grief," that Isaiah announced and whose mystery has for the Christian its resolution in Christ, shows great interpretative complexity. He must have meditated all his life on Isaiah's chapters 51-52, since references to the biblical text are so numerous in the titles of his paintings. However, the Gospel's narrative is undoubtedly the biblical source that gives rise to the most intense and dramatic involvement, as seen in the repeated and factual delineations of the face of Christ he painted in scenes of the passion, in the *Ecce Homo*, the Crucifixions. "One of the great themes that totally absorbed me," he wrote, "is the sufferings and death of Christ."[17]

A second element, a highly symbolic one that may be called mystical-legendary, adds to the characterization of Rouault's Holy Face: the legend of Veronica. In the nineteenth century, France saw a revival of the devotion to the Holy Face. It was a cult of reparation set off by the work of a Carmelite nun from Tours—Sister Marie de Saint Pierre—and her supporter, the lawyer Léon Dupont, known as "The Holy Man of Tours." Thérèse de Lisieux and all her family were members of the Arch-confraternity of the Holy Face of Tours, and she took the name of "Saint Thérèse of the Holy Child and of the Holy Face." The innumerable and mediocre images of the face of Christ on Veronica's veil, at the time reproduced in prints of no artistic value, had no influence on Rouault, but Veronica's legend and the spiritual message it conveys did have a profound impact on him.

Veronica (*Vera icon*) was the woman who approached Christ on his way to Calvary; full of compassion, she used a veil to wipe the spittle and blood from his face, obtaining Christ's features that were miraculously imprinted on the cloth. It may be added that in the late nineteenth century, in the highly cultivated circles of French Catholicism there was great interest in the works of the poet and writer Clemens Brentano, who had transcribed revelations of the life of Mary and Christ written earlier in the century by the German nun and mystic, Anna Katharina Emmerich. She had also presented anew the ancient Veronica legend, and it attracted writers like Joris-Karl Huysmans and Léon Bloy, both admirers of Brentano's writings. Rouault, who knew and was in frequent contact with these writers, was also fascinated by the story and fully appreciated the beauty of Veronica's gesture. It became for him the image of humanity that meets Christ on the way to the cross and receives his image through a gesture of compassion.

The origin of Veronica's legend, however, is much older and is rooted in Christian piety. According to a tradition of Eastern and Western Christianity that has different versions but common elements, the first image of the face of Christ was *acheropita* (i.e. not made by human beings; miraculous): it was a gift that he himself made, as explained in a narrative where compassion and prodigy are intertwined. For the East, it was Christ who impressed on a cloth his image that no painter had ever been able to delineate: he sent it to the gravely ill King Abgar of Odessa and the king was healed. This would be the Mandylion that disappeared from Constantinople during the Crusades. For the West, it was the story of Veronica on the Via Crucis (*le chemin de la Croix* / the way of the Cross) and of her veil that cured the leprosy of Emperor Tiberius. In the Middle Ages, pilgrims went to Rome not only to visit the apostles' tombs, but also to venerate in Saint Peter's the cloth impressed with the face of Christ that was believed to be Veronica's (it disappeared at the beginning of the seventeenth century). The *Veronica*, or *Holy Face*, was the banner of the "romei" pilgrims, whereas those on their way to Jerusalem had the palm as their banner and the travelers to Santiago de Compostela wore the well-known shell. There is no doubt that Veronica inspired artists and painters, from those at work on Books of Hours and illuminated missals and the minor or little-known artisans who disseminated her image in churches, to great masters like Hans Memling, Albrecht Dürer, Francisco de Zurbarán.

Devotion to the cloth named *Veronica* was certainly part of the medieval cult of relics, but it would be wrong to consider it only in the context of a purely devotional dimension. In the prayer composed by Pope Innocent III (1198-1216), the cloth is venerated as a *memento* of the passion of Christ (and therefore as a sign of his love that brought

salvation) and as an anticipation of the vision of God in the next life (an eschatological dimension equally essential for Christianity). It is significant that Dante Alighieri accepted and included its theological value in his *Divina Commedia* and *Vita Nuova*.[18] At the end of the *Commedia*, the theme of Veronica is the prelude to Dante's meeting with St. Bernard and to the luminous vision of God.

Her legendary—yet so true—figure is a poetic expression of a spiritual doctrine rooted in the holy texts and full of diverse facets: the longing for the face of God, the strain to turn the eye to his image on the sorrowful path to the cross, the incitement to follow him in his path of compassion and mercy as to enter a contemplative state and receive and almost weave the divine traits inside oneself. (This actually happens in one of the most beautiful works by the old Rouault, where the luminous and lovable face of *Veronica* [**no. 67**], although remaining a delicate feminine face, will be marked with Christ's own features). Rouault becomes Veronica's companion in her wait for the arrival of Jesus and in her rush to him, in an exercise of compassion to be repeated through renewed looks and infinite gestures, since—to use the words of Pascal that deeply moved him—"Jesus will be in agony until the end of the world" (**27ii** and **no. 63**).[19]

Another occurrence contributed to the emotional intensity of his vision, turning it toward a delineation of Jesus that only in part followed earlier forms. This is the third element in his inspiration: his encounter with the Shroud. It is well known that the Shroud, venerated as the burial garment of Jesus, is an ancient linen where the figure of a crucified body is faintly impressed. It is conserved in a reliquary in the Cathedral of Turin and at intervals of different lengths it is exhibited to the veneration of the faithful. When it was shown in 1898, Secondo Pia, a lawyer from Turin, photographed it for the first time with the use of large plates (20 x 24 inches). When he extracted the plate from the photographic bath, he did not see the negative he expected; he saw instead a clear positive and, for the first time, the nitid image of the man of the Shroud:[20] a body and a face of majestic solemnity composed in death, with the signs of the passion described in the Gospels. This made quite an impression on him, and there was a similar reaction from visitors at his own house, when he exhibited one of the plates for one week before a public show took place. Now, in front of everybody's eyes was not only a tortured body, but also a face, at first only barely legible, with its enigma and expressive vigor—an image that gave rise to many questions and controversies.

Mr. Pia specifically remembered that among the visitors there was Paul Vignon, a doctor from Paris whom Georges Rouault knew quite well. In the following years, Vignon published a book and articles on the Shroud, convinced as he was of its authenticity.[21] It may be assumed that, once he returned to Paris, he externalized the excitement and interest he felt when he saw the photographic plate and the public exhibition of the Shroud, and that he also displayed some early photographs. It is quite likely that he spoke about it with Rouault, even more so in that Isabelle Rouault remembered not only that Vignon was a friend of her father, but also that he was always deeply moved by the Shroud.[22]

One more element, this time purely pictorial, may be added to explain Rouault's fascination with the Shroud. That image put him in front of the expressive power of a face that lacks a third dimension; it suggested that he could attempt to seek expressive intensity and loftiness through a two-dimensional approach that in painting was generally reserved for decorative forms. In that same period, although in a different way, his friend Matisse and other young Parisian artists like the *nabis* resorted to flat forms seeking expression through deformations and unconventional constructions.

IV. The Novelty of Rouault's Renderings of Christ

In the years that immediately followed, there was a change in the way he painted the features of Christ: the forms and the traits now undoubtedly recall the face in the Shroud. An influential critic like Bernard Dorival, an important scholar of our painter, clearly stated about Rouault's renderings of Christ: "the prototype should be sought nowhere

but in the Turin Shroud."[23] In the 1904 *Sainte Face*,[24] the first known painting with this title that the artist signed and dated, the memory of the face of the man of the Shroud is evident, although in this picture the eyes are not closed, as in the Shroud, but open and staring into unfathomable distances. It is tempera and gouache with specks of golden dust; the face, whose contours are dark and elongated, is impressed on a little white cloth that could allude both to Veronica's veil and to the Shroud. It is also, however, an implicit reference to the "veil of the flesh" mentioned in the Letter to the Hebrews. That face, as many others that will follow, seems to imply that the divinity of Jesus (suggested by the golden dust) has truly come to dwell among us in human form; and that his humanity, touched by the light of glory even in death, is marked for eternity by the stigmata of the Passion.

This work represents, in my opinion, an important juncture also in relationship to what may be called Rouault's *poetry of light*, which is the basis of his chromatic investigations. On it he grafted a *mysticism of light*, intended as the elevation and identification with God recognizable in his works with a religious subject. Rouault, who had at first favored somber tones and darkness but later celebrated the splendor of a light that touches and enlivens color with new tonalities, wrote: "The light caresses and magnifies form." Changing from the murky tones of his early years to the astonishing chromatic gamma of his old age, light now touches forms and surfaces, creates contrasts and arranges them in harmony. Touches of white, like the black contours and the strongly marked lines perceived with an immediacy that occasionally eclipse them, have an essential function. In the series of his representations of Christ, light is astonishingly variegated, and not only in the light and white touches or in their contrasts with black—it is often created by tones that are juxtaposed, it is fused with color, at times it almost bursts from it (**nos. 75-78, 80-83, 87-88**).

It may not be accidental that Rouault called Veronica's veil "linen," since the Shroud is notably a fabric made of linen, or that at times he referred to it as "Saint Suaire," the French name for Shroud. The unblemished *whiteness* of Veronica's veil (unblemished because not marred by time, as a vision that anticipates another one beyond this world) thus becomes one with the burial linen dimmed by the passing of time and events, and its reflection lives in the unmistakable whiteness of Christ's tunic (**no. 47a**). Christ may be instantly identified through this robe when in Rouault's painting he walks in the streets and in the countryside, or stops among the poor people in the *faubourgs des longues peines* (**nos. 27k** and **47h**), on the shores of lakes in the *paysages légendaires* (**no. 27j**), in the intimacy of houses, or solitary walks (**nos. 47i, 47j, 47l, 47m, 51,** and **52**). Christ is mixed with infinite figures, and his white tunic brightens up every land and every life with a spark of its light (almost as an announcement of redemption). It is almost like a recurring musical/painterly theme, an unmistakable and discreet touch of light that, albeit only a pictorial element, conveys a secret accord in which faith and art vibrate together.

V. In the Sign of Compassion

As we have seen, the artist becomes Veronica's companion in his search for Jesus and in the exercise of compassion:

> and Veronica with soft linen
> still passes along the road…(**nos. 27gg, 71, 72, 75-77**)

Aspiration to God—the search for his features—and compassion were the secret forces that guided Rouault in the representation of the mysterious and holy face of Christ. As mentioned above, this search is tied to the struggle to discern the divine presence in humanity, since the human race, although immersed in the ugliest of sin, is nevertheless marked forever by the original stamp—denied and desecrated, perhaps, but never abolished. Compassion, therefore, is capable of revealing both the face of God and the nature of humanity. Rouault was undoubtedly the painter of human vice and weakness, but he was always aware of human grandeur even in the midst of sin. As a Christian, he sensed humanity's unexpressed

invocation for redemption and salvation, a longing for forgiveness. It is thus no coincidence that when he painted the condemned, the prostitutes, and sinners in general, they seem to be presented more for our pity than for our condemnation.

Rouault seems to suggest that Christ mysteriously remains in the world in human history, but his presence is hidden from superficial glances and from the arid heart of those who do not grasp "that which is neither visible nor able to be weighed."[25] From his early years, the painter carried the "deep sadness and infinite melancholy" shared by all those who know "*le dur métier de vivre*" (the difficult job of living life) (**no.27n**). Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* confirmed an intuition Rouault already had since compassion made him understand how penetratingly the genius of a great artist can examine the grievous reality of sin and discover unsuspected depths: "Yes, despite my infirmity I feel and I discover new beauties at each moment and what beauties, unknown and marvelous… amidst reality."[26]

It would be a mistake, however, to think of Rouault as a painter only of sin and human miseries, because he captured the native splendor of creation and the glory that touches humanity—sinful, yes, but redeemed by Christ. The beauty of nature, of its forms and colors, of its rhythms and harmonies, filled his vision as a painter. Everything that is human moved him and awakened in him infinite resonances: the plasticity of bodies, the pathos of sentiments and passions, the intensity of gazes, the gracefulness of gestures.

VI. Some Reflections on Rouault's Iconography

We have already said that art and faith come together in the features that Rouault gives to Christ. In his search for those traits there is an echo of the passions, the hopes, the sufferings and labors of humanity, of the quest for God, of the irrepressible longing to know and see Him—and this is why Rouault's paintings have universal significance. All this is part of his work as an artist: his search for the most appropriate pictorial ways, the study of the expressive power of colors and forms, the invention of compositional rhythms, the love for the matter and for the light. It may be useful, however, to add some brief considerations on his iconography and on some characteristics of his artistic language in order to better understand the geniality of his painting and the depth of his Christian faith.

In his renderings of Christ, for instance, there is no halo, either simple or crossed: at times, it is the color that becomes more vivid in proximity of the head that may suggest its presence (**nos. 41, 46k,** and **53**). It is rather the light that marks the unusual purity of a face and imbues it with majesty. Accordance—and also contrast—between light and darkness acquire different intonations throughout the years: at times they are highly dramatic, at times they are peaceful, resplendent and even dazzling, or they may be "somber and grave." Also the color is constantly renewed. Everything contributes to the creation of a spiritual atmosphere and of a highly religious meaning. No human face painted by Rouault has the same simplicity of form, the same purity and essential qualities in marks and color that Jesus has. The black contours around his face give the impression that light has been constrained and concentrated in a small space, thus acting as a subdued reminder of the confine within which the divine being, in itself limitless, placed himself with the incarnation. This divine *kenosis* may also be suggested by the pictorial borders in which he eventually came to inscribe the divine face—and the refined magnificence of these borders certainly represents a luminous expansion of God's mysterious existence, since they are arranged as a frame of glory while also creating a boundary.

His features, full of collected dignity and sweetness even when the dramatic elements are emphasized, are beautiful for the humility of mercy and appeasement they express. They open the heart to love and they direct us to the splendor of the divine vision, inviting us to enter the *hortus conclusus*, the secret garden of contemplative love.

Over the years, the model does not undergo radical transformations: the same oval of the much elongated face, the same double line of the long and thin nose that creates unity and balance between the arc of the brows created by the two large eyes and the beard below, where a minute mouth is

inserted. The vertical tracing of the nose, the narrow cheeks, the horizontal direction of the forehead are all elements that draw attention to the immense eyes, whether the lids are closed or the eyes are luminous and alive. If they are closed, they are not extinguished in death, but rather turned to the "different" dimension of interior realities and to a vision of "things that are above"[27] (**no. 77**). When the eyes are open, they are enormous, marked by traits that give them depth and a penetrating force that uses each time a different register (**nos. 72** and **75**). More than any other feature, they make us think of the secret semblance of God, they pour a look of mercy upon the world, and perhaps they offer a glimpse of the divine mysteries. We may see in them a resemblance to the eyes Jesus had on earth, through which he saw the blond wheat, the flowers of the fields, the sparrows of the sky, the fishermen on the shore, the lepers or the dead son of the widow of Nain, the young rich man who looked and loved, revealing that in the heart of God are hidden the desire and the longing of man's heart. They are glances of mercy and forgiveness: they show the greatness and beauty of the incarnation and redemption and they reveal to man his own self and his destiny.

A Taboric Light transfigures many faces of Christ and also illuminates Rouault's work:[28] most of the time, it does not flow from an identifiable source and it is seemingly immaterial; it almost emanates from the objects themselves and shows their preciousness, as if a stream of glory were pouring over creation. According to a spiritual doctrine, when Jesus turned his eyes to the things that were created, he transfigured them with beauty in the context of the redemption. John of the Cross writes that Jesus, during his short presence on earth, looked at things and "he left them imbued with beauty, transmitting the supernatural to them."[29]

Iconography remains constant, although with natural variations, but repetitiveness is avoided through a skilled orchestration of a painting's intrinsic elements: spaces, overall architectural composition, color, antithesis between light and shadow on the basis of chromatic relationships, different density of the painter's materials, graphic elements that change not only in relationship to the type of color (oil, gouache, pastel, India ink), but also to the work's content. Every element—if it does have a pictorial value—also includes an ulterior sense that tends to the unknown, and one "other" reality that may not be reduced to definitive interpretations. The beauty of a work makes it universal, yet it contains in one indivisible unit the human spirit that formed it, with its treasures of thought, sentiments, passion, and faith.

The factors that contribute to give life to such works cannot be reduced to technical elements: although they are the result of long and constant artistic practice, they are based on habits of silence and meditation as the fruit of a humanity that developed in communion with other people. They are gifts of harmony and beauty from an artist faithful to his artistic vision and to his own human destiny.

In the context of the poetic and mystic light we have discussed, it is important to observe that the linen cloth, on which the face of Christ was represented, was gradually replaced by a fabric of light that, emanating from and behind his features, forms the veil itself. The luminous splendor of the portrayals of Christ that Rouault painted in his maturity seem to be a presage of Easter, even though that was the time of his humiliation and of the cross. The symbolism of light is well known to a Christian because it is constantly presented in the liturgy, with its high point in Easter celebrations. "Light of Christ" sings the catholic liturgy in the long watch of Easter night. With a pictorial skill of the greatest refinement, the artist conveyed the religious value of light: layers of juxtaposed colors create a thick and crusty surface where light and almost intangible brushwork create chromatic vibrations, thus evoking the immaterial light of God that pours over the universe and over humanity. "Show us the light of your face, turn toward us, O Lord "[30] (**no. 88**).

According to the mystic Dionysius, beauty is one of the divine names.[31] In God, there is a beauty that attracts the human heart, and it was in reference to this that Augustine said "Late I loved you, beauty so ancient and so new!"[32] St. Francis of Assisi, in turn, proclaimed in his laud to the Lord "You are beauty."[33] The Spiritual Canticle by John of the Cross is pervaded with the sense of God's beauty and of the soul's thirst for it. Plato had already perceived the bond between the beautiful and the divine, and wrote about the ontological and theological value of beauty.[34] For the ancient Greeks, one sole word, *kalokagakia*, joined the two terms *beautiful* and *good*.

Divine things have been presented to us in a poetic atmosphere. In the Bible, beauty and poetry imbue the word of God; always and everywhere art has had a place in religion, marking the sense of the sacred and the place of worship. Christianity does not fear representations of the divine mystery because, after the Word was incarnated, it knows that the invisible is present in the visible and that it transpires through the splendid veil of beauty, "reflection dispersed and prismatized of the face of God," to use the words of Jacques Maritain in *Art et Scolastique* (Art and Scholasticism, 1920/1927).[35] In this book, he discussed ancient classic principles in relationship to modern art and he wrote it, according to the testimony of his wife Raissa, "thinking about Rouault," his great friend.[36]

Beauty is as infinite as being, has the same endless variations and, like goodness, it awakens desire and love. Its earthly splendor is connected to the beauty of God—it is "the splendor of truth," said the ancients. These intuitions come to us, and they are posited anew in order that our interior sight may turn to the contemplation of beauty and the soul discover its reflection within itself; they bring us to a quiet contemplation that finds its rest in God, just as our eyes instinctively turn to beautiful things to find their peace.

Through beauty, God murmurs divine words to the heart of man. What Suarès called the "Christian beauty" blossomed through the centuries in the art of churches and monasteries, in places of prayer and sacred images, in the harmonies of liturgical chant and gestures. Through the centuries, it almost acted as a rite in the gift of salvation offered to humanity; it has been an announcement of the "Unutterable." Truth and beauty are everywhere. The mystery of every being is also a mystery of beauty, as Rouault well understood. Like Don Quixote, the hero of his childhood, "*radiating* from his *interior dream* which lets [him] see the world through the clear mirror of [his] soul,[37] Rouault saw the world in a totally new way, discovering its secret harmony, understanding the profound unity between the human universe and the redeemed one.

Rouault considered painting "an ardent confession," but at the same time he believed that, through its universal language of form, color and harmony, painting could change reality in its physical materiality and open the door to the "spiritual regions where the artist dares to go," and "where an order that is more perfect than that of the controller of weights and measurements does reign." It is the universe of poetic vision, the discovery of visible or hidden beauties, of rhythms and harmonies still unknown. It is the entrance to the musical atmosphere of the beautiful in all its forms.

In this weak and carnivorous world
I love all that has no weight
all that is fleeting
form, color, harmony
oasis dear
to the heart of the sinner
the just or the irreligious

Form, color, harmony
blessed trinity
open the eyes of the blind
and give to the deafest of men
joy or sorrow
on an elevated plane
far from all controllers of weights and
measures.

Turning then to Christ, Rouault refers to himself in the third person ("he paints") as the "painter loving his art":

Oh, Jesus crucified
he paints in order to forget his life
"unyielding grief"
far from this world of shadows and
semblances
he has departed without noise toward
blessed regions
which haunt him day and night
toward blessed regions
where all is harmony
to his eyes, his heart and his soul.[38]

Translated from the Italian by
Josephine von Henneberg

Translations of French texts by
Mary Robinson Kalista

Endnotes

1 Gerard Manley Hopkins, "As kingfishers catch fire," in *The Poetical Works of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. Norman H. Mackenzie (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992) 141.

2 *Georges Rouault – André Suarès, Correspondance* (Paris: Gallimard, 1960) 174.

3 Georges Rouault, "Parler peinture" (1926), *Sur l'art et sur la vie* (Paris: Denoël/Gonthier, 1971) 102-103.

4 Georges Rouault, "Cette prétendu laideur" (1936-1937), *Sur l'art et sur la vie*, 115.

5 Georges Rouault, *Souvenirs intimes* (Paris: Editions Frapier, 1926).

6 Undated letter of Rouault to Pierre Matisse quoted in *Gallery Notes*, 1953, XVIII, n. I; repeated in *Georges Rouault, Exposition du Centenaire* (Paris: Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1971) 49.

7 Hopkins, "As kingfishers catch fire" 141.

8 Colossians 1:15.

9 Georges Rouault, "Eve," *Sur l'art et sur la vie* 149.

10 Georges Rouault, *Soliloques* (1944), *Sur l'art et sur la vie* 52. For Rouault's use of light to "magnify the form" of the lowly circus figures in his 1930s work, see Gael Mooney essay in the present volume.

11 Georges Rouault, *Cirque de l'Etoile filante* (Paris: Vollard, 1938) 14.

12 In a letter he wrote around 1905 to the art critic Edouard Schuré, we find the autobiographical origin of this transposition, which may be connected—as other aspects of his pictorial world—to feelings of compassion: "For me at the end of a beautiful day when the first star shining in the firmament grasped, I don't know why, my heart, immense creativity unconsciously followed. That cart of nomads, stopped on the road, the old bony horse who grazes on meager grass, the old clown seated in the corner of the caravan mending his shiny and gaily-colored costume, this contrast of brilliant, glittering things, made to amuse and this life of infinite sadness if one sees it from slightly above…Then I expanded on all that. I saw clearly that the 'Clown' was I, he was we… almost all of us…That rich and sequined costume, it is life that gives it to us, we are all more or less clowns, we all wear a 'sequined costume' but if one takes us by surprise as I surprised the old clown, oh! So who will dare to say that he/she is not shaken to his/her very soul by unmeasurable pity. I have the failing (failing perhaps…in any case it is for me an abyss of suffering…) to never allow anyone his 'sequined costume,' be he king or emperor. The man that I have before me, it's his soul that I want to see…[…] To derive one's art from glancing at an old nag of a traveling acrobat (man or horse) is 'insane pride' or 'perfect humility' if 'one is made for that.'" G.

Rouault, "Lettre à Edouard Schuré," *Sur l'art et sur la vie*, 171-172.

13 Georges Rouault, *Cirque de l'Etoile filante* 16.

14 François Mauriac, "Un geste d'amour," interview by A. Parinaud in *Art*, (15 July 1952), qtd. in *Hommage à Georges Rouault*, special number of *XX Siècle* (Paris: 1971) 80.

15 Psalms 27:8.

16 Hebrews 10:20.

17 Bernard Dorival and Isabelle Rouault, *Rouault. Oeuvre peint*, 2 vols. (Editions André Sauret, Monte Carlo 1988) 2: 58.

18 Respectively: *Paradiso*, canto XXXI, 193-108, canto XXXIII, 130-131; *Vita Nuova*, chap. 40.

19 Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, ed. Brunschvicg n553.

20 Although the English word "nitid" (meaning bright, shining; polished, glossy) is used almost exclusively today in botany (as a descriptor of leaves), the translator has used it here to most approximate the Italian *nitido*. Editor's note.

21 Paul Vignon, *Le linceul du Christ: étude scientifique* 2nd ed. (Paris: Masson et Cie, 1902); Vignon, *The Shroud of Christ. With nine photogravure and collotype plates and thirty-eight illustrations in the text* (New York: Dutton, 1900).

22 For more precise details, see Nora Possenti Ghiglia, *Il volto di Cristo in Rouault* (Milan: Ancora, 2002).

23 Dorival and Rouault, *Oeuvre peint*, 1:174.

24 Dorival and Rouault, *Oeuvre peint*, 1:124.

25 Letter of Rouault to Suarès (13 May 1939), *Correspondance* 319-320.

26 Letter of Rouault to Suarès (16 July 1911), *Correspondance* 3.

27 Colossians 3:1.

28 Original Italian: "Una luce taborica trasfigura tanti volti di Cristo, e illumina anche l'opera di Rouault…." Since the earliest Christian centuries, Mount Tabor has been identified as the location of Christ's Transfiguration. The terms "Taboric Light" and "Light of Tabor" refer to this transfiguring light and are sometimes used with esoteric connotations. Editor's note.

29 John of the Cross, Spiritual Canticle *B* in *Opere* (Rome: Postulazione generale dei Carmelitani Scalzi, 1998) 534-535.

30 Psalms 4:7.

31 Dionysius the Aeropagite, *The divine names*, IV, 7.

32 Augustine, *Confessions*, 10, 27, 38.

33 Francis of Assisi, *Lodi di Dio altissimo*, 10.

34 Plato, *Convivium*, 197b.

35 Jacques Maritain, *Art et scolastique*, in *Jacques et Raïssa Maritain. Oeuvres complètes*, 15 vols. (Fribourg [Switzerland]: Éditions Universitaires; Paris: Éditions Saint-Paul, 1982-) 1:649

36 Raïssa Maritain, *Les Grandes amitiés*, in *Jacques et Raïssa Maritain. Oeuvres complètes* 14:846. See also Bernard Doering essay in the present volume.

37 Letter of Rouault to Suarès (21 April 1916), *Correspondance* 141. Emphasis original.

38 Georges Rouault, *Stella vespertina (1947)* in *Sur l'art et sur la vie*, 125, 134, 135. cf. "All is imponderable in the spiritual realm the artist seeks to explore, but there reigns a hidden order that is more true than that pertaining to weight and measure." Qtd. in Gael Mooney and Stephen Schloesser essay in the present volume.

Rouault in New York: Art and Reputation in the Mid-Century United States

David Quigley

For the first time in a generation, the spring of 2007 brought something of a renaissance of interest in the work of Georges Rouault in the New York City art world. Nearly a half century after the artist's death and more than thirty-five years since Rouault's reputation had dramatically declined on this side of the Atlantic, "Georges Rouault: Judges, Clown and Whores" appeared at a Manhattan gallery, sparking an interesting moment of critical reconsideration. The *Sun*'s critic, noting that this was the first substantive Rouault collection mounted in Manhattan since the Eisenhower administration, raved about the show, urging New Yorkers to see the works in person. Michael Kimmelman, the lead art critic for the *New York Times*, noted in the daily paper that while "you wouldn't call it a full-fledged revival," there was something unexpectedly compelling about the canvasses on display. Even as the critic offered a strikingly generous assessment, he could not avoid borrowing from a line of Rouault criticism that dated back to at least the early 1960s. Invoking Clement Greenberg's now-legendary dismissal of the Frenchman, Kimmelman conceded that "Greenberg had a point. The lesser works are overripe and formulaic. They're hard to love for generations that have come of age since the 1950s."[1]

Such contemporary criticism reflects a long-standing American consensus that had removed Rouault from the first ranks of modern masters. Even as twenty-first-century observers marvel at the "judges, clowns, and whores," their responses are mediated by the past decades of critical devaluation. It is difficult for us today to recognize just how visible a figure Rouault was in the American art world at the middle of the last century. As surprising as his emergence as a particular favorite among Manhattan's art elite by the 1940s was Rouault's astonishingly rapid fall from favor in the years after his death in 1958. This essay traces New Yorkers' responses to Rouault in the middle decades of the twentieth century to highlight some of the ways in which modern art and metropolitan culture were redefined in the early years of the Cold War.

Georges Rouault had been a major figure on the continent for decades before his first New York gallery show opened in 1930, one year before his sixtieth birthday. Eight years later, the Museum of Modern Art organized a show of his prints; in 1940, a major Rouault exhibition toured the nation, visiting Boston, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C. As Europe experienced the horrors of total war, and as modern art steadily moved to a more established place on Manhattan's cultural landscape, Rouault now moved to center

stage and stood as one of a handful of contemporary European masters. Along with Picasso and Matisse, Rouault represented the height of European art to Americans in the era of the Second World War. It is worth noting that the primary institutional center for establishing Rouault's American reputation between the 1930s and the 1950s was New York's Museum of Modern Art. The Modern was itself a recent development, having been founded a decade earlier, and remaining still very much a work in progress in the late 1930s. As curators and trustees alike worked to identify the Modern alongside and apart from the uptown Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rouault would figure prominently in the new institution's first quarter century, with three major shows devoted to his work.[2]

Before the Second World War had even concluded in Europe, New York's modernist establishment returned to the work of elaborating on Rouault's significance for their tragic age. James Thrall Soby, one of the leaders of the Museum in its early decades and a figure who would remain as trustee until his death in 1979, curated a major retrospective exhibition in the spring of 1945. Edward Alden Jewell, reviewing the show for the daily *Times*, was struck by the juxtaposition with the Piet Mondrian memorial exhibition on display downstairs at the Museum. Jewell confirms the curator's glowing praise, judging that "the grandeur of [Rouault's] accomplishment thus far prompts one, peering back down the complex vista of modernism, to agree with Mr. Soby when he asserts that Rouault 'emerges as one of the few major figures in twentieth-century painting.'"[3] The 1945 celebration of Rouault at the Modern opened up a decade-long American interest in the Frenchman's work. A major collector and player in the Manhattan art world in addition to his work as curator of the 1945 show, Soby was instrumental in building up Rouault's reputation among Americans as a modern artist of the highest order. In 1946, Soby was promoted to chair of the department of painting and sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art.[4] The first postwar years were a critical moment of institutional and personal advancement for the Modern and for Soby, and the work of Rouault were quite useful for both Museum and curator.

Even in those first postwar years, however, cracks in the critical consensus could already be detected. In time, Soby himself would undergo a personal change of heart, one that reflected a broader metropolitan shift in Rouault's reputation. In a later unpublished memoir, Soby expressed far greater skepticism regarding Rouault, remembering that "I couldn't understand... why admiration for him should have made these [American] collectors dismiss as charlatans Rouault's peers in the School of Paris, especially Picasso... Rouault was incense, Picasso quicksilver, and I preferred the latter substance."[5] More significantly, Rouault was regularly deployed for tactical advantage by various critics; his utility in the critical battles of the day would eventually work to undermine his legacy. As early as 1948, New York writers were holding Rouault up against what were alleged to be the worst excesses of his fellow moderns. Guy Pene du Bois's review of Jewell's *Rouault* linked his celebration of the Frenchman to "the revulsion of the modern school,... [which] has sent many of its members rushing, somewhat hysterically, away from life." For du Bois, "Rouault belongs to art—not anything so evanescent as modern art."[6] In some ways, the particular accomplishments of Rouault mattered less for New York critics than his fundamental differences from other mid-century European visual artists. By the time Una Johnson curated a Brooklyn Museum show of Rouault's graphic work in the early 1950s, claiming Rouault to be the "perturbed conscience" of twentieth-century art," the metropolitan art world was embracing other artists and movements, most notably Abstract Expressionism.[7]

Soon after Johnson's show in Brooklyn, the Modern opened its last major Rouault show in 1953. Co-organized with the Cleveland Museum of Art, this exhibition surveyed the full career of the by-then-octogenarian artist. The show's companion volume featured an introductory essay by the philosopher Jacques Maritain. Rouault was held up, by Maritain, as a defining and original cultural figure of the age. Critics across the city and around the nation reflected on the long span of Rouault's career and struggled to make sense of his place in the emerging canon of twentieth-century European art.

Howard Devree, the *Times*'s critic, recalled the sensation of Soby's 1945 show, celebrating the French artist while simultaneously beginning to separate him out from his era. For Devree, "Rouault's is a solitary figure. In a period when technical invention and the formal and abstract organization of pictures have so frequently been emphasized over content, he has held to the delivery of a great humanitarian message for a half century, more akin to Goya and Rembrandt in spirit than to Picasso, Matisse, and Braque"[8] Perhaps most notable in Devree's essay is his attempt to hold Rouault up as something of a model for a younger generation of artists coming of age in the postwar world. For the critic, Rouault's enduring man-out-of-time quality added to his cultural significance. In the coming years, this aspect of Rouault's image would serve to make him look more and more like an artistic anachronism in a metropolitan art world ever more fixated on the new and the contemporary.

The year after the 1953 show at the Modern was a particularly important moment in the history of Modernism in America as it marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Museum's founding in 1929. The Museum's leadership organized a series of events across 1954 to mark the ascendancy of the Modern and to link modern art to broader national and international concerns. The year-long celebration culminated in an October anniversary gala, which brought together a range of elite New Yorkers and opened with a recorded message from President Dwight Eisenhower. In the second year of his first term, Eisenhower's Republicanism was marked by a firm commitment to victory in the Cold War and by a deepening religiosity in public rhetoric. His Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, was most responsible for the pious language of crusade that characterized Eisenhower-era diplomacy and cultural politics. Yet across the administration, and in the President's own words, a more religious nation was imagined. This explicit religiosity makes Eisenhower's remarks at the Modern even more striking. For the Republican President went out of his way to celebrate the Museum of Modern Art and, more importantly, the kinds of works on display therein. Defining artistic freedom as a fundamental "pillar of liberty," Eisenhower warned the audience that "for our republic to stay free, those among us with the rare gift of artistry must be able freely to use their talent." Moving to his core message, the President invoked the Soviet Union's totalitarian threat in terms of the arts, portraying the U.S.S.R. as a society where "artists are made the slaves and the tools of the state when artists become chief propagandists of a cause, progress is arrested and creation and genius are destroyed."[9]

President Eisenhower was not alone in linking the Museum of Modern Art to the great struggles of the early Cold War. In attendance at that 1954 celebration was the Secretary General of the United Nations, Dag Hammarskjold. A relative newcomer on the city's landscape, the UN's move to the East Side of Manhattan was perhaps the most important symbol of New York's global leadership in the first postwar decade. Hammarskjold's presence at the anniversary gala reminds us that his UN and the Modern were twin markers of a modern, global New York that was in the process of emerging in the 1950s. For the Secretary General, the Modern spoke to the hopes and aspirations not just of New Yorkers and Americans, but also of peoples around the world. Hammarskjold linked the Museum and its exhibitions to the project of finding solutions to pressing problems globally, defining the institution as "a museum for the art which reflects the inner problems of our generation and is created in the hope of meeting some of its basic needs."[10]

Rouault's importance to the Museum of Modern Art in its early decades forces us to complicate ongoing debates about the Modern's place in the cultural politics of the early Cold War. To take a particularly heated exchange, the critics Michael Kimmelman and Frances Stonor Saunders have taken very different positions on the Museum's relationship with the CIA and the American government. Kimmelman paints a largely sympathetic portrait of the Museum's leadership in the 1940s and 1950s as he attempts to debunk a range of more conspiratorial interpretations of the cultural interests of the Rockefellers and other backers of the Modern. Saunders rejects Kimmelman's argument, pointing to his work as "official" history, while she offers up an extensive exploration of the Museum and the American government's embrace

of Abstract Expressionism in the 1950s and 1960s. Missing in these approaches, and in the other polemics which characterize the debate, is a sense of where an artist like Rouault fits. At least for the first postwar decade, his art stood close to the heart of the Modern's institutional identity, yet his work would not seem to support either side in the debate about the Museum's strategic use in Cold War diplomacy.[11] Rouault became a major figure in the United States between 1945 and 1953 through the backing of the Museum of Modern Art, part of New York City's broader self-construction of itself as replacing Paris as the center of world culture. A particular challenge, and one which would endure well beyond 1953, was how to assert Manhattan's preeminence in the visual arts. Where Paris had stood for generations as the world's art capital, New York would eventually emerge triumphant. In the decade of Rouault's greatest popularity in New York, however, that transition was by no means guaranteed.

The quarter century after the Modern's 1954 anniversary witnessed a remarkable decline in Rouault's position in New York's art world. Institutions and individual critics alike turned away from the Frenchman's work as something of a critical consensus against his work emerged. Seen now as overly religious and moralistic, Rouault's fall from grace among metropolitan audiences was precipitous. The years after the artist's 1958 death led not to an outpouring of admiration but rather to an escalating chorus of criticism. Clement Greenberg signaled this major shift in Rouault's place in the New York art world; by the early 1960s, Greenberg judged "it ought to be clear by now that he is not a great or major artist. He is, on the contrary, a rather limited one who masks a conventional sensibility behind modernist effects, and a certain studiedness behind attitudes of spontaneity.... Rouault takes few real chances."[12] As the decade went on, such criticism would gain a foothold among more and more New Yorkers.

By the time of Rouault's centennial in 1971, the turn against the artist had become the stuff of conventional wisdom. David L. Shirey's dismissal of Rouault in the *New York Times*, in the guise of a review of the 1971 retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art in Paris, articulates the full range of the anti-Rouault argument. Shirey was not at all ambivalent, proclaiming that "taken as a whole, the art of Rouault is painfully repetitive without an élan of creativity in the repetition." The critic seems to have lost patience with his subject, sarcastically noting that "if it is not difficult to grow weary of Rouault's subject matter, it is even less difficult to tire of his incessant moralizing." In attempting what he thought was an evenhanded conclusion, Shirey revived the criticism of Rouault as anachronism: "the paradox of Rouault is that he could not often relate to his subjects for he could not relate to his century, and yet he did not possess that special artistic genius necessary to transcend his own time."[13] Such remarkable contempt for Rouault reads less about the work of a dead Frenchman and more about an escalating crisis of cultural authority in post-Sixties New York.

Voices such as Shirey's and Greenberg's articulated a fully formed critical consensus which would remain powerful for the rest of the century. As each decade brought New Yorkers another wave of exhibitions devoted to early twentieth-century masters like Picasso and Matisse, the works of Rouault faded from view. The metropolitan imagining of the modernist movement no longer had room for Rouault's canvasses. The New York of the early 1970s—the era of political disaster, military defeat, and economic crisis—was home to a far different art world from that of the 1945 and 1953 Modern exhibitions. As the Cold War entered its second quarter century, and as the Modern was now part of the city's and world's cultural establishment, Rouault did not seem to fit. His declining, even disappearing reputation reflected a local urban culture narrowing down its own sense of the recent past, as one particular form of modernism was legitimated and other recent voices and traditions were crowded out from view.[14]

Endnotes

1 Lance Esplund, "The Oldest Professions," *New York Sun*, May 10, 2007; Michael Kimmelman, "Revisiting Rouault's Stained-Glass World," *New York Times*, May 29, 2007.

2 On the Museum of Modern Art, see John Elderfield, ed., *The Museum of Modern Art at Mid-Century: At Home and Abroad* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1994), and *The Museum of Modern Art at Mid-Century: Continuity and Change* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1995). Jed Perl's *New Art City* (New York: Knopf, 2005) is an especially illuminating interpretation of the mid-century art world in New York City.

3 "Veteran Modernist: A Half Century of Paintings by Rouault. . .," *New York Times*, April 8, 1945. James Thrall Soby, *Georges Rouault: Paintings and Prints* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1945).

4 "James Soby, 72, Art Connoisseur and Trustee of Modern Museum," *New York Times*, January 20, 1979. On Soby, see especially, John Elderfield, ed., *The Museum of Modern Art at Mid-Century: Continuity and Change* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1995), as well as Nicholas Fox Weber's *Patron Saints: Five Rebels Who Opened America to a New Art, 1928-1943* (New York: Knopf, 1992).

5 Soby memoir in James Thrall Soby Papers at the Museum of Modern Art Archives, quoted in John Elderfield, ed., *The Museum of Modern Art at Mid-Century: Continuity and Change* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1995) 227.

6 Guy Pene du Bois, "Brutality, Pathos, Graciousness," *New York Times*, March 21, 1948.

7 Howard Devree, "A Unique Master: Brooklyn Museum Opens a Notable Show of Graphic Work by Rouault," *New York Times*, December 23, 1951.

8 "Rouault's Mastery: Modern Museum Opens Splendid Survey of His Work," *New York Times*, April 5, 1953. Georges Rouault, *Rouault Retrospective Exhibition, 1953* (Cleveland and New York: Cleveland Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art, 1953).

9 Sanka Knox, "President Links Art and Freedom," *New York Times*, October 20, 1954.

10 Knox, "President Links Art and Freedom."

11 Kimmelman essay in *The Museum of Modern Art at Mid-Century: At Home and Abroad,* ed. John Elderfield (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1994); Frances Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* (New York: The New Press, 2000). For an original approach to the cultural politics of the early Cold War, see Penny M. Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 2004).

12 Clement Greenberg, *Art and Culture: Critical Essays* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961) 84.

13 "Rouault: The Crumbling of a Myth?," *New York Times*, September 5, 1971.

14 For an especially illuminating interpretation of the cultural transformations of the early 1970s, see Andreas Killen, *1973 Nervous Breakdown: Watergate, Warhol, and the Birth of Post-Sixties America* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2006).

PART VI: UNFINISHED WORKS

1963: *Les inachevés*: The Donation of Mme Rouault and her Children

Stephen Schloesser

> In every era, the attempt must be made anew to wrest tradition away from a conformism that is about to overpower it.[1]

After Georges Rouault died in February 1958, eight hundred and ninety-one "unfinished" works—"*inachevés*"—were found in his studio.[2] These presented his heirs with a somewhat complicated problem. The legal status of "unfinished" works had been at the heart of Rouault's court case with the Vollard heirs, a dispute settled only eleven years earlier. In 1947, the court had ruled that works not yet finished—"*œuvres en cours d'exécution*" (works in the process of being executed or fulfilled)—were the property of the artist.[3] Seven hundred works were returned to Rouault by the Vollard heirs (the other one hundred and nineteen having been sold). The decision provoked severe criticism of Rouault in the press.

In November 1948, judging that at the age of seventy-seven he would never be able to complete them, Rouault had burned three hundred and fifteen of the seven hundred returned *inachevés* in a highly public setting in front of witnesses. One might have thought that this would silence critics who accused Rouault of wrongly suing the Vollards for financial gain. However, it provoked yet another wave of criticism. The editor of *Esprit* wondered aloud whether it was not "a dangerous precedent for a great creative artist to take upon himself the judgment of the ages, saving this work and destroying that one, leaving behind him no traces of the doubts and hesitations through which the human side of the artist could be grasped."[4]

Clearly, the events of 1947-48 made the question of what to do with hundreds of unfinished works after Rouault's death a decade later more complex than usual. On the one hand, selling them would have seemed to have violated the principles for which the artist had stood and suffered. On the other hand, destroying them would have opened the family to the type of charge leveled by *Esprit* in 1948—preemptively assuming for themselves "the judgment of the ages" and destroying "traces of the doubts and hesitations" of the artist.

In 1963, Rouault's heirs chose a middle way: the *inachevés* were donated to the Musée national d'Art moderne, largely for pedagogical and scholarly purposes. The works all bear the credit line, "Donation de Mme Rouault et ses enfants, 1963." Thanks to Bernard Dorival, a curator at the national museum (and, later, the author of the text for Rouault's catalogue raisonné of painted works[5]), and André Malraux (France's first Minister of Culture from 1960 to 1969), one hundred and eighty-one unfinished works were exhibited

in the Louvre's Salon Carré in 1964 (**fig. 1**). The exhibition then traveled to Japan, and later, in a greatly reduced form, to Great Britain and Canada. Photographs of several of these works were reproduced for the catalogue in black and white.[6]

Fig. 1. André Malraux (center) converses with Isabelle Rouault at the exhibition of unfinished works at the Louvre's Salon Carré, 1964

By 1971, however, restrictions had been specified and added. On the occasion of the centenary of Rouault's birth, seventy-three of these works were brought out of reserve for the Musée national d'Art moderne's great retrospective exhibition. However, they were not reproduced in the catalogue, as noted in its opening "*Avertissement*." The middle part of the exhibition, advised the catalogue, consisted of "an ensemble of *inachevés* (emphasis original) chosen from the donation consigned to the State by the family of the artist.... Conforming to the will of the artist's family, no *inachevé* (emphasis original) is reproduced. In contrast, the totality of the works of the first section, and the great majority of the engraved works [of the third section] are reproduced in the catalogue."[7]

Following the 1971 retrospective, as Pompidou curator Angela Lampe notes, "on account of the severe conditions placed on the donation which can be explained by the painful history undergone by Rouault and his family following the death of Vollard, this collection of unfinished works [*inachevés*] became practically confidential. Today, the multiple prohibitions (of loans, of photographic reproduction and exhibition of works considered too little advanced) have become progressively lifted."[8]

Thanks to this recent relaxation of restrictions on the *inachevés*; and a generous loan from the Centre Pompidou, *Mystic Masque* is able to exhibit eighteen of these works, rarely or never before seen. Viewers can experience themselves what Lampe describes: "This unique collection reveals how Rouault worked in series by ceaselessly repeating the same motifs...from new points of view, chromatic tonalities, and formal arrangements. The freshness and luminosity of colors are arresting. We discover a Rouault who is more free, lighter, and more sensual than the one that we thought we know." These *inachevès* provide, as Lampe poetically suggests, a "kind of pictorial intimate diary (*sorte de journal intime pictural*)."[9]

Although it would have been possible to collect an assortment of one or two variations each on several of Rouault's repeated motifs—Pierrots, acrobats, dancers, Biblical landscapes, impoverished urban settings—this exhibition has instead chosen twelve variants on a single motif, the *Sainte Face* (along with examples of three other motifs to demonstrate the collection's nature). Repetition of the *Sainte Face* image underscores its centrality to the theme of *Mystic Masque*. However, the choice was also made for the sort of pedagogical purpose that lay behind the 1963 donation—namely, that comparing a substantial number of exemplars of one motif produced over a span of at least four decades allows the viewer to grasp, within a single perspective, the evolution of Rouault's vision through time. To this end, and to maintain a distinction between the works Rouault considered finished and those considered works-in-progress, the *inachevés* are not exhibited within the overall chronological

sequence, but have instead been grouped together on a single wall.

Two works bearing the title discussed above—*Et Véronique au tendre lin (Sainte Face)* (And Veronica with the tender linen [Holy Face])[10]—are dated as having been produced before 1922 (**nos. 71** and **72**). Created with simple ink and gouache on tracing paper, the black outlines with spare uses of gray shades convey a lightness and simplicity that matches the subject. This is a youthful Christ whose wide-open eyes, reminiscent of Romanesque and Byzantine works, are those of late antique portraits described by Peter Brown: "Their emphasis is on the eyes. The eyes flash out at us, revealing an inner life hidden in a charged cloud of flesh." As Julian the Apostate (332-363) wrote of the philosopher who most influenced him, "The very pupils of his eyes were winged, he had a long grey beard; one could hardly endure the sharp movement of his eyes."[11]

The next three examples of the same motif (bearing the same titles) are dated as having been worked on between 1922 and 1939. The first of these (**no. 75**) would seem to be closer to the two just considered: the materials are the same and so is the coloration, although now Rouault indulges the gray gouache and experiments with filling in. A subtle difference is introduced, however, with the addition of thorns—they jut out on both sides of the head in black and the forehead is marked by downward gray strokes that echo the thorns. The image seems to be moving away from the bare simple lines of the earlier pieces, influenced as they had been by published photographs of the Shroud in 1900 and 1902,[12] and moving toward the emphasis on Christ's bodily suffering as seen in the plates of the *Miserere* (**nos. 27x, 27ee,** and **27ii**). The eyes, too, have lost some of their innocent simplicity by being filled in with gray. They now know suffering.

The next two examples dated between 1922 and 1939 (**nos. 76** and **77**) differ markedly precisely in their eyes, which give the impression of being closed. In general, this inward turn toward contemplative depictions takes place after 1930, in Rouault's sixties, suggesting that they might be works done closer to the 1939 end of the spectrum than to the 1922 end. A comparison of **nos. 75** and **77** demonstrates how subtle shifts render two very different depictions: the staring eyes of **no. 75** (which strongly resembles the 1933 painting, *La Sainte Face*, **no. 41**) conveys the sense of ancient portraits described by Peter Brown. However, by simply omitting the pupils and filling in the eye cavities with gray gouache, Rouault has changed the genre from a portrait to either an inwardly focused living person or the imprint of the deceased Christ on the Shroud (despite their titles' allusion to Veronica's Sudarium). The applications of bright white and teal gouache in **no. 76** might suggest a dating closer to Rouault's return to oil painting in 1928, a moment exemplified by *Chanteuse à la plume blanche* (**no. 31**). In addition to the added color, the effect of the white, applied in strokes emanating outward, suggests an aura. Significantly, a close examination of the area over the head shows that the black thorns pass somewhat imperceptibly into black strokes also emanating outward, not as thorns but, again, as an aura. This layering of halo upon thorns again suggests the 1933 painting in which the emanating yellow strokes seem to evoke elements of suffering and glory. The wounds are, paradoxically, also elements of healing.

The two Holy Faces dated post-1930 and 1939-45 (**nos. 80** and **81**) provide an excellent example of Rouault's production of nearly identical forms with radically different effects due to chromatic tonalities. These are not suffering figures: neither has traces of thorns, and both depict Christ absorbed in inward contemplation. The "Yellow Harmony" of the first conveys not merely warmth but intense heat, due also to the depth of the red contrast used in the border. The pastels of the second communicate just the opposite—the various shades of rose and teal, accenting a mostly neutral background (brightened with a vivid contrasting orange), convey the coolness seen in work of the late 1930s like *Le Clown blessé* (**no. 62**) and the *Divertissement* of the early 1940s.

The green harmonies of **nos. 82** and **83**, dated fairly closely together (between 1936 and 1939) offer other contrasts, as well. The "Green Harmony" of the first, softened even further by the powdery texture of its application and juxtaposed lavender shades, conveys a coolness similar to that

just discussed. (Rouault's experimentation with juxtaposing contrasting shades of lavender adds to the softness.) The experimentation in the second, again featuring a cool play of teal, lavender, pink, and grayish blue, fills the center of the canvas with orange heat on the left side of Christ's face (the viewer's right), while the face's right side provides a cool pink counterpoint. The thickly pronounced strokes evoking a halo around Christ's head, the initial makings of a frame, are developed more fully in the undated variant (**no. 78**), a study in blues. The well-defined frame and the solidity of the figure invites a comparison with the 1936 painting, *Paysage Légendaire* (**no. 51**).

The final two Holy Faces, *éléments décoratifs* (ca. 1949, **no. 87**) and *harmonie cuivrée* (ca. 1953, **no. 88**), offer superb examples of what has been referred to above as the brilliant and almost hallucinatory coloration of Rouault's later years. The play of oranges and yellows that seem to radiate from the "decorative elements" parallel those in the nearly contemporaneous *Vieux Faubourg (mére et enfants)* (1951, **no. 69**). The thickly painted Byzantine serenity of the "coppery harmony" prepares the way for the magisterial *Sarah* (1956, **no. 70**), one of Rouault's very last works.

In addition to the twelve variants on the *Sainte Face*, *Mystic Masque* is also fortunate to have four *inachevés* that are variations on the *Miserere* plate *Sunt lacrymae rerum* (**no. 27z**), discussed above.[13] Both variants dated pre-1926 (**nos. 73** and **74**) were done as preparatory studies for the *Miserere* plate completed in 1926. The agile ink drawing has the light airy feeling of an arabesque, and the combination of Orpheus' tilted head along with the sketched outline of his lyre gives the cartoon a sense of youthful longing. The addition of the gouache in the second demonstrates the way Rouault adds volume and substance and emphasizes the neoclassical elements in vogue during the 1920: the toned musculature, the echoes of fluted columns in both clothing and lyre, and the impression of sculpted stone. In the *Sainte Face* above (**no. 77**), filling in the eye cavities with gouache gave the impression of eyes closed in contemplation; here, the same application of gouache instead gives the impression of Orpheus' blindness, due to the upward stare of the hollow ovals. A curious addition is the white accent on the side of the head that might have been an experiment leading to the flash of white plume in the *Chanteuse à la plume blanche* (**no. 31**), painted in 1928. Indeed, the suggestion of flowers in the hair gives this figure a somewhat androgynous look, perhaps intentionally so as it points toward the "bluebird"—later incarnated as Maria Lani—with which Orpheus is interchangeable.

In the other two variants from the 1930s (**nos. 84** and **85**), Rouault seems to retreat from the neoclassical statuesque and return to the more fluid arabesque. The post-1936 version introduces warmth through the medium of flesh tones and orange variations, seemingly substituting supple human skin for what had been gray granite. The sensuous pastels of the 1931–1939 version, bathed in the softening moonlight, recall two other transfigured nights: the *Abandonné* of 1935-1939 and *Le Clown blessé* of 1939 (**nos. 61** and **62**). Once again, the pink-cream addition in Orpheus's long black hair—seemingly interchangeable with Christ's—gives the figure a curiously androgynous feel. (The androgynous character seems even more pronounced when compared with yet another production of 1939 featuring a nude body in pink pastel, *Nu au miroir*, **no. 56**.) The ambiguously Christ-like appearance of Orpheus is amplified by a de-emphasis on muscle tone and a heightening of the elongated body's nudity, facilitated by the pink coloration of the skin. With the lyre almost entirely hidden, the only element breaking the overall nudity is the narrow band of cloth, again evoking the figure of Christ. Whether Christ or Orpheus, this depiction, more than any other of the *Sunt lacrymae rerum* variants, conveys a feeling of profound vulnerability beneath the heavens.

Two final *inachevés* are single examples of motifs. The portrait of *Verlaine à la Vierge* (1929-39, **no. 79**) gives the viewer an opportunity to see Rouault's experimentation on the way to the large painting with the same name (1939, **no. 60**). Considered from the standpoint of the figure, it would seem that the *inachevé* was likely produced before 1933, that is, before Rouault had worked so carefully with Verlaine's photographic portrait to produce the lithograph *Verlaine* (**no. 36**); and with his

death mask to produce the head of John the Baptist (**no. 37**). The head and face of Verlaine in the *inachevé* bear little resemblance to Rouault's copy of Verlaine's photograph, accurately portrayed in the 1939 painting. Additionally, we know from Rouault's poetic fragment quoted above—"The harmonious rose of your scarf, / On cold and saddened blues…"[14]—that the artist associated this primary color contrast with Verlaine in particular. The blues of the *inachevé* are, in fact, quite cold and heavy, and the bright red scarf sits on them awkwardly. By turning to pastels (as with so many other works in this period), including the flesh-tones on Verlaine's protruding bald forehead, the 1939 painting, by contrast, succeeds at the harmony Rouault sought.

The final *inachevé* in the exhibition is the *Ecce homo* (1922, reworked ca. 1950, **no. 86**). Of all Rouault's unchanging motifs, this is one of the most constant. It is found already in the 1912 *Miserere* notebook (see fig. 6d in Schloesser "1902-1920"); it appears in the 1920s *Miserere* as Christ *toujours flagellé*... (**no. 27b**), *Le condamné s'en est allé*... (**no. 27v**), and *Il a été maltraité* (**no. 27y**); and it appears here, originating in that same 1920s period but reworked around 1950 in the last years of Rouault's life. It is perhaps the most somber of Rouault's motifs, signifying the "criminal" who is unjustly judged and mocked. Its title and figure bring us back to Dürer's *Large Passion—Ecce Homo* (see fig. 3 in Schloesser "1921-1929"); the scriptural phrase preserved in Latin, conveys a sense of timelessness; and the significance of the phrase, "Behold the man" or, perhaps more generally, "Behold humanity," suggests the universal human condition. Given these sober and somber associations, Rouault's brilliant, hallucinatory, near-florescent explorations in color, applied to a grave subject to which he had returned again and again over the four decades since his father's death, provide a glimpse into his youthful mind at age eighty. As in his choice to depict *Sarah* at the very end of his career, it seems that *Ecce Homo*, too, is a way of saying: "Every view of things that is not wonderful is false."[15]

Fabrice Hergott, a leading Rouault scholar, has observed: "I believe that in Rouault's case the true canvas is always situated beyond the canvas; forever, permanently. There is something here that I would characterize as a quest—an extremely romantic one in fact—that is seeking a fusion of art and life by way of their incompletion."[16] The *inachevés* constitute pockets of resistance to closure, never-ending works-in-progress, monuments to incompletion. As old as *Ecce Homo* may grow, it remains forever young.

1 Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History, *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (1968; New York: Schocken, 1969) 253-264, see p. 255.

2 See Stephan Dahme in this volume.

3 Angela Lampe, "Work in progress. Les œuvres inachevées," *Georges Rouault, forme, couleur, harmonie,* catalogue published for the Musée d'art moderne et contemporain de Strasbourg exhibition, 10 November 2006 to 18 March 2007, commissariat Fabrice Hergott (Strasbourg: Musées de Strasbourg, 2006) 214-221, see p. 214.

4 *Esprit* (February 1949); qtd. in Pierre Courthion, *Georges Rouault* (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1962) 296.

5 Bernard Dorival and Isabelle Rouault, *Rouault: l'œuvre peint*, 2 vols. (Monte-Carlo: Éditions André Sauret, 1988).

6 Lampe 214-15.

7 "Avertissement," *Georges Rouault. Exposition du Centenaire, Musée National d'Art Moderne, 27 mai - 27 septembre 1971* (Paris: Ministère des Affaires Culturelles, Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1971) xi.

8 Lampe 215.

9 Lampe 215.

10 See Schloesser, "Notes on the *Miserere* plates exhibited in *Mystic Masque*," and "1939-1958: Perpetual *Peregrinus*"; see also essays by Roberto Goizueta, James Keenan, and Nora Possenti Ghiglia in this volume.

11 Peter Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity AD 150-750* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971) 74, 67n49.

12 See Virginia Reinburg in this volume.

13 See Schloesser, "Notes on the *Miserere* plates exhibited in *Mystic Masque*."

14 Letter of Georges Rouault to Auguste Marguiller (June 1, 1914); qtd. in Dorival and Rouault, *l'Œuvre peint* 1:350.

15 Caroline Walker Bynum, "Wonder," *The American Historical Review*, 102/1 (February 1997): 1-26, see p. 26.

16 "*Je crois que dans le cas de Rouault le vrai tableau était au-delà du tableau, toujours, en permanence. Il y a quelque chose disions une quête extrêmement romantique en fait d'une fusion de l'art et de la vie par le non achèvement.*" Fabrice Hergott, speaking in the film *La peinture à l'infini*, produced by Joël Danel and Loïc Robine (Strasbourg: Écart production, 2006). Transcription by Anne Bernard Kearney.

Et Véronique au tendre lin passe encore sur le chemin...

James F. Keenan, S.J.

Viewing Rouault's *Miserere,* we are evidently struck by the prominent role that Veronica's veil has in the series. Not only does it appear five times, but in two different compositions and in pivotal positions in the sequence. The two most striking images, **nos. 27gg** and **27fff**, conclude each of the series' two parts, *Miserere* and *Guerre*. In both of these, Jesus' head is covered with a crown of thorns and his face is bloodied. In the *Guerre* part, the image appears another three times, in the first print and then twice at the heart of it. In all three, Jesus' face is serene, not bloodied, and rather than a crown of thorns ensnared in his scalp, the hair of Jesus is as placid as his countenance. In each of the three, the veil hangs in a setting and is given a context. In the first (**no. 27hh**), the veil oversees the heading *Guerre.* In the other two, the veil hangs as Jesus' sign of solidarity for those who are just and suffer (**no. 27tt**) and for those who cry out of the depths (*De Profundis)* for their voices to be heard (**no. 27ss**).

There have always been multiple manifestations of the "Veronica." Two that paralleled one another were of Jesus suffering with eyes closed and Jesus with eyes wide open, having risen from death into glory. These two versions appear whether the Veronica is depicted simply as the true icon, the *vera icon* itself (as it is in all five plates from Rouault's series) or whether it includes the woman Veronica holding her veil, another common rendition. For the free-standing icon, Matthew of Paris (1200-1259), an English Benedictine monk and illuminator of manuscripts, and Gervase of Tilsbury (1150-1228), another English monk and canonist, depicted these two versions of the face of Christ on a cloth. For the latter type of composition, the Maestro della Veronica (from Cologne) painted two works, one of the suffering Jesus (1410), the other the glorious Jesus (1420).[1] These two paintings influenced later painters, for example, Hans Memling (1435-1494), whose Veronica looks much like the Maestro's later work.[2]

Though he has two Veronicas, Rouault departs from the Maestro's pair: one is sorrowful, while the other is more at peace, we could even say, at rest, rather than in glory. Though he does not give us a Veronica in glory, he presents one whose death companions us in our suffering.

Finally, while the Veronicas of plates 33 and 58 draw us into the sadness of the suffering of Jesus, the other three are more extroverted, consoling the sufferer. Here then we recognize that the prints *do* something. One brings us into the soul of the sufferer; the other extends in solidarity to the one who suffers, here ourselves.

The contemporary understanding of the Veronica myth is fairly simple. As Jesus dragged his cross to the place of his crucifixion on a hill outside of Jerusalem called Golgotha, a maid pushed through the crowds and used her veil to wipe the blood and sweat from Jesus' face. After the encounter, Jesus continued along the way, and Veronica saw on her veil that Jesus left a bloodied imprint of his face, an imprint not made by human hand, a miraculous *acheiropoieta*.

Most commonly, the public imagination locates this narrative in the sixth of the Stations of the Cross. The Stations of the Cross is a devotional practice consisting of fourteen meditative moments considering Jesus' own passion and death, from his trial to his death and burial. In its evolution from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century, the number of stations varied greatly, from seven to thirty-four, though eventually, they were shaped into the present day fourteen. To this day, the same fourteen Stations can be found in most Catholic churches: wood-carved or painted depictions of scenes representing Jesus' trial and death.[3]

The stations are spaced in order around the church so as to allow us to walk from one station to another and at each to stop and consider the scene, to pause to pray with and for Jesus, and to move to the next station. Starting along the way of the Cross (*sur le chemin*), we begin at the first station, the house of Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor who hands Jesus over to his death.

As a devotional practice, the Stations developed in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to offer Christians, unable to travel to the Holy Land, a visual though "constructed" experience of following in the footsteps of Jesus as he went to his death. Thus, in the mid-fifteenth century, Dominicans at a friary in Cordova constructed a series of chapels, each painted with a principal scene of the passion and death of Jesus. The Poor Clares did the same in Messina. Others built them in Görlitz and at Nuremberg. In the early sixteenth century, these were reproduced elsewhere, notably at Louvain, Bamberg, Fribourg, and Rhodes.

Moreover, since Jerusalem had fallen under the Ottoman Empire, these practices of walking the way of the cross commonly occurred not in Jerusalem, but in Europe. There, Christians developed accompanying prayers and meditations for the devotional procession of the Stations of the Cross.

Just as devotion led to multiple reproductions of the Stations, similarly the *vera icon* was reproduced repeatedly. Interestingly, the icon seemed to have within itself the capacity to reproduce.[4] For instance, one of the earliest expressions of the Veronica myth tells of an imprint of Jesus' face having been made on a cloth that cured the king of Edessa, Abgar. Later when his grandson, an apostate, sought to destroy the cloth, the bishop of Edessa decided to cover it with a tile so that the dampness of masonry or any other wet mortar would not be able to compromise the cloth. It remained hidden from the first until the sixth century when the Persians threatened to overtake Edessa. The bishop of Edessa at that time unearthed the cloth and found not only the image unharmed, but that it had also produced a copy of itself on the tile that protected it.[5]

As Jesus produced an imprint of himself on Veronica's cloth, the Veronica continues, like the Stations themselves, to reproduce itself. As Herbert Kessler and Gerhard Wolf note, "The Holy Face was deemed capable of spreading the Lord's presence throughout the world."[6] Thus, in 1850, a "Confraternity of the Holy Face" was founded to disseminate images of the face throughout the world.[7] Like the image itself, Rouault too made sure that the Veronica was reproduced repeatedly.

By the end of the eighteenth century, this devotional practice became a mainstay in parish life. First, in 1686, the Franciscans, long time governors of the Christian sites in Jerusalem, received from the pope the right to erect the Stations in all their churches throughout the world. He also granted to the Franciscans who walked the Stations in whatever place the same indulgences as those who walked the Way of the Cross in Jerusalem. In 1726, the indulgences were granted to all Christians who did the devotional exercise and in 1742 all priests were exhorted to establish the Stations in their churches.[8]

This practice of bringing Jerusalem to the pilgrim instead of the pilgrim to Jerusalem should not be missed. For this same reason, relics were brought from Jerusalem so that others may approach, see, and even touch the traces of the life and death of Jesus. In history, no relic has engendered a greater sense of tactile intimacy with Jesus than the veil of Veronica. The imprint of the blood stained face of Jesus becomes an object of pilgrimage.

Whence the Veronica

Getting to the contemporary understanding of Veronica's veil is no mean feat. Dom Henri Leclerq calls the Veronica myth an "imbroglio of legends."[9] Instead of an imbroglio, I suggest that the legend, like the cloth on which it appears, evolved through history by absorbing one narrative into another.

The myth unfolds in three stages: first in the transformation of the Hemorrhissa into the woman, Veronica; simultaneously, in the East, the healing of King Abgar is eventually attributed to an imprint of the face of Jesus, a true icon, a *vera icon*; and finally the two are fused into an imprint not made by human hands (an *acheiropoieta*).

The earliest trace of the Veronica is found in the Gospel account of a woman suffering from a hemorrhage for twelve years (Mt 9:20-2; Mk 5:25-34; Luke 8: 40-56). The Gospel of Luke describes the account of Jesus' healing of this woman (8:43-48) in the context of another miracle dealing with the twelve-year old daughter of Jairus, an official of the synagogue (8:40-43; 49-56). Upon returning to Galilee, Jesus is met by Jairus, who begs for Jesus to visit his daughter is dying.

> As Jesus went, the crowds almost crushed him. And a woman afflicted with hemorrhages for twelve years, who (had spent her whole livelihood on doctors and) was unable to be cured by anyone, came up behind him and touched the tassel on his cloak. Immediately her bleeding stopped. Jesus then asked, "Who touched me?" While all were denying it, Peter said, "Master, the crowds are pushing and pressing in upon you." But Jesus said, "Someone has touched me; for I know that power has gone out from me." When the woman realized that she had not escaped notice, she came forward trembling. Falling down before him, she explained in the presence of all the people why she had touched him and how she had been healed immediately. He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has saved you; go in peace." (Luke 8: 43-48)

Jesus arrives at Jairus' home and is informed that the girl has died. Jesus then raises her from the dead.

In sum, Jesus is touched by a woman hemorrhaging for twelve years, heals her, and calls her "daughter" as he sends her away. When he touches the dead twelve-year-old daughter, the witnesses suddenly recognize that she has attained the age when menstruation begins.[10] In both miracle stories, purity boundaries have been broken and so they become intimately linked by blood, touch, and number.

The centrality of the first miracle is the touching of Jesus' garment. Once the Hemorrhissa (as she is later called) touches the cloak of Jesus, her blood ceases to flow. Later she becomes the Veronica, who uses her own garment to wipe the blood off the face of Jesus. Ewa Kuryluk comments on the achievement of the Veronica absorbing the Hemorrhissa narrative: "Out of these correspondences the medieval version of the myth is distilled—a marvel of symmetry: the man whose cloth has stopped the woman's bleeding has his own flux of blood which she arrests with her cloth."[11]

After the Gospels, the Hemorrissha appears in Eusebius's *Church History*. There, in 325, we hear simply a description of her house, where she had erected a memorial narrating her healing.[12] After this report, we find in four apocryphal (and anti-Jewish) texts the melding of the Hemorrhissa into the Veronica with the healing image of Christ.

In the *Acts of Pilate* 7.1 (roughly the end of the fourth century), the Hemorrhissa is identified as Berenice, a Macedonian version of the Greek name Pherenice ("bearer of victory"), in Latin, Veronica.[13] At the trial of Jesus, a variety of witnesses testify

to Jesus' innocence, but some Jews contradict them. At that point, we read: "And a woman called Bernice (Latin: Veronica) crying out from a distance said, "I had an issue of blood and I touched the hem of his garment and the issue of blood, which had lasted for twelve years, ceased. The Jews said, 'We have a law not to permit women to give testimony.'"[14]

Later, *The Healing of Tiberius* (probably from the sixth century) tells of the Emperor Tiberius being sorely diseased. He learns from a Jew named Thomas about the miracles of Jesus and sends a great officer, Volusian, to find Jesus. In Jerusalem, Volusian discovers that Jesus has been crucified, under the authority of Pilate, and arrests and imprisons Pilate. Then Volusian learns of "a woman of Tyre, Veronica," who "possessed the likeness of Jesus who had cured her issue of blood three years before." After denying any ownership of such a likeness, she produces under compulsion the image to Volusian, who "adored it, and threatened with punishment all who had taken part in Jesus' death." Voulsian brings Veronica and the likeness back to Tiberius in Rome, "who adored it and was healed. He gave money to Veronica, and made a precious shrine for the likeness, was baptized, and died after some years in peace."[15]

Third, from at least the tenth century, if not the eighth century, *The Vengeance or Avenging of the Savior* attributes the destruction of Jerusalem to the Crucifixion.[16] Within the narrative, Emperor Tiberius, who has "fever and ulcers and nine kinds of leprosy," looks for a cure. His followers "search for the likeness of Jesus and found Veronica, who had it.... Veronica was the woman healed of the issue of blood."

> The emperor's kinsman Velosian examined Veronica, who denied that she had the likeness. He threatened her with torture; at last she confessed that she had it in (or on) a linen cloth and adored it every day. She produced it. Velosian adored it, took it, put it in a gold cloth and locked it in a box, and embarked for Rome. Veronica left all she had and insisted on coming with him. They sailed up the Tiber to Rome after a year's journey.

Tiberius hears of their arrival.[17]

> And the Emperor Tiberius said: Bring it to me, and spread it before my face, that I, falling to the ground and bending my knees, may adore it on the ground. Then Velosian spread out his shawl with the cloth of gold on which the portrait of the Lord had been imprinted; and the Emperor Tiberius saw it. And he immediately adored the image of the Lord with a pure heart, and his flesh was cleansed as the flesh of a little child. And all the blind, the lepers, the lame, the dumb, the deaf, and those possessed by various diseases, who were there present, were healed, and cured, and cleansed.[18]

Finally, much later, in the fourteenth century, *The Death of Pilate* appears in the *Golden Legend*. Though the text is barely apocryphal, it recounts the story of the image of Jesus and how it heals Tiberius. Interestingly, however, it tells yet another way that Veronica received the imprint. The story is very brief, made up of two central episodes: a Veronica narrative involving the cure of Tiberius and an account of the suicide of Pilate.

The first episode begins with Tiberius, who, sorely diseased, learns that there is a wonderful physician in Jerusalem named Jesus. He sends an officer, Volusian, to Pilate who becomes alarmed since he has had Jesus crucified. The officer later meets "a matron called Veronica and asked her about Jesus." She told him all about Jesus, including his death, but "to console him added that when our Lord was away teaching she had desired to have a picture of him always by her, and went to carry a linen picture to a painter for that purpose. Jesus met her, and on hearing what she wished, took the cloth from her and imprinted the features of his face upon it. The cloth, she said, will cure your lord: I cannot sell it but I will go with you to him." Volusian and Veronica return to Rome, and Tiberius looks on likeness and is healed instantly.[19]

In succession then the first narrative identifies the Hemorrhissa as Veronica; the second puts a healing cloth with an imprint in her hands; the third identifies the cloth as linen and shows how it

heals not only Tiberius of his leprosy but all people; the fourth begins to tell how she came by the cloth. As her association with the cloth bearing an imprint of the face of Jesus develops, the cloth has greater curative powers. She remains faithful to the cloth, usually not disclosing it unless forced to do so. Still, once she and it are discovered, she is witness not only to her own cure, but also to the life and death of Jesus. Effectively, Veronica, both the woman and the image, are evangelists: they preached Christ crucified. Finally, she remains faithful to the image, refusing to sell it, instead accompanying it all the way from Jerusalem to Rome.

Still, almost each narrative is accompanied by the emperor's punishment of Pilate and of the Jews, both for the death of Jesus. Moreover, the narratives get bloodier, culminating in the very popular *Vengeance of the Savior*'s account of the destruction of Jerusalem. As Kuryluk notes, "The horrible requires the sweet. The more blood flows, the more sentimentality is projected onto the figure of the Hemorrhissa Veronica, the Good Woman of Jerusalem who prefers exile to abandoning Christ's portrait. Some medieval legends leave us with the impression that Veronica is the city's only survivor."[20]

If we return again to Eusebius's *Church History* for the parallel development of the Veronica in the East, we find a very different account of the emergence of the *acheiropoieta*. There he tells a story from 30 C.E. of the healing of King Abgar of Edessa from an incurable disease, perhaps leprosy.[21] Abgar learns of Jesus the miracle-worker and begs him to come and heal him. Jesus writes him to say that he will send a disciple. After his death and resurrection, Jesus sends Thaddeus to cure the king. When Thaddeus arrives, Abgar sees a vision on the face of Thaddeus and bows down. Thaddeus touches the king, Abgar is healed and becomes a Christian.[22]

In a later text, *The Doctrine of Addai*, we find a different story though roughly of the same time period. Abgar sends three messengers including his personal secretary Hannan, on a mission. As they return they learn of the miracles of Jesus. Abgar writes a letter to Jesus, delivered by Hannan, asking that he be healed. Jesus responds, not by a letter, but by a verbal message to Hannan that after his ascension into heaven he will send a disciple to him. But while Jesus is speaking, Hannan paints his portrait and gives it to Abgar, who gives the portrait pride of place. Later the disciple arrives and the healing of Abgar occurs much as Eusebius reports.[23]

Kuryluk comments: "The image episode illustrates the transition from the linguistic to the iconic tradition. Eusebius' account is focused on Jesus' letter—God's written word. The Doctrine of Addai introduces God's picture and diminishes the significance of divine communication by changing script into spoken message. The acceptance of Christ's image requires the rejection of pagan representation."[24]

By the sixth century, the story shifts. Now, Hannan fails in a fair representation of Jesus, but Jesus washes his face, takes a towel, makes an imprint of his face, and hands it to Hannan, who brings it to Abgar and Abgar is cured. In the Abgar legend this is the first time that the picture is identified as not made by human hands (an *acheiropoieta*) and that it and not the disciple Thaddeus cures Abgar.[25] This is the image referred to as the *mandylion*, meaning anything from a towel or napkin to a veil or handkerchief.[26]

The face of Jesus as an imprint, not made by human hands, again has the capacity of healing disease. Moreover, as in the Tiberius story, the disease is leprosy, one of the flesh. Moreover, in both traditions, the imprint heals the sovereign, whether king or emperor. Finally, the imprint prompts a personal conversion that in turn leads to the Christianization of the empire. The image itself is evangelical in both traditions. Still, for the Greeks, as Herbert Kessler notes, the cloth that bears the *acheiropoieta* is not Veronica's veil, since in fact there is no woman; rather the cloth of the Veronica is the veil of the Temple itself.[27]

How do these two narratives become entwined? To get there, we must make a leap into oral history. There, by the end of the tenth century, both traditions associate the *sudarium*, or sweatcloth, whether alone (in the East) or in Veronica's home

(in the West), as being the cloth with which Jesus wiped his face when he sweat drops of blood in the Garden of Gethsemane. "What clearly coincides in the East and the West is the need to return to the same moment and the same place, that is, to attribute both Mandylion and Veronica to an original touch of Christ in Jerusalem."[28]

Gerhard Wolf points us to an important sermon from Archdeacon Gregorios in 944 when the *Mandylion* was brought from Edessa to Constantinople. The sermon refers to the *vera icon* as the sweatcloth that Jesus used during his agony in the Garden. Wolf summarizes the sermon, which describes the colors of the *acheiropoieta* that well evoke those of Rouault:

> Gregorius describes the various reds for cheeks and lips, the luminous black for the eyebrows, the color to be used for the beard, the ears and the nose, the highlights and shadows of the higher and lower parts of the face of such icons, and so forth. The medium by which the splendor of the image of Christ, however, has been impressed are drops of sweat shed in the fear of death, sweat that flowed from the Face which is the origin of life. These are drops of blood guided by the finger of God.[29]

Later, in 1143, there is in Rome a *sudarium* called the Veronica, though there is no reference that it bears an image. In the mid-twelfth century, Peter Mallius describes Saint Peter Basilica as possessing the *sudarium* that Christ used to wipe his face in the Garden. Again, no mention is made to an image. Still, at the end of the twelfth century, Pope Celestine III showed Philip Augustus, who had just returned from Jerusalem, the cloth bearing the image.[30]

In 1204, with the Latin conquest, the Mandylion disappears forever from Constantinople. Meanwhile, the cult of the Veronica continues to develop in Rome. In 1208, Innocent III vests devotion to the *sudarium* with indulgences.[31]

Still, how did the *vera icon* shift from being a cloth that Jesus used to wipe his face in the Garden to being Veronica's veil, which she used to wipe his face along the way to Calvary? The first time this account appears is in the late twelfth-century *Legend of Joseph of Arimathea* by Robert de Borron.[32] Once the *icon* becomes coupled with the healing image that Veronica owned, it becomes no longer Jesus' sweatcloth, but rather something gotten by the one with the same name as the object she owned. Wolf writes:

> This is the infrastructure for the diffusion of the Veronica of St. Peter's, which finally drew the stream of narrations onto itself or implanted itself in them. The legendary origin in the episode of the Agony of the Garden taken over by some twelfth century sources from the Mandylion were forgotten, and the focus was now placed on a female figure whose name is the same as the veil with the imprint, a woman presumably healed by Christ himself. This new adaptation of the Western legendary tradition was an important step in the career of our image.[33]

Devotion to the Veronica prompts a proliferation of the images. In celebrating the holy years in 1300 and 1325, more and more copies of the sweatcloth are made, but by 1350 the first pictorial emerges of Veronica with the Veronica. Furthermore, devotion to the Veronica accompanied greater veneration of the Eucharistic host. As the faithful learned to gaze on the host, they learned to gaze on the veil, and knowing themselves to be made in the image of Jesus Christ, they saw in both a reflection of themselves. Wolf writes:

> The Veronica became an omnipresent image in western Christianity, and was in fact the first universally known individual image of Christ in the West. The omnipresence of the Holy Face and the sacramental

> body in public and private devotion is an important process in the universalization and individualization of the later Middle Ages in Europe.[34]

Wolf sees here an enormous shift in the meaning and the function of the Veronica. "The cult of the Veronica in the West—the most intense and diffused cult of an image known between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries is in my eyes a symptom of a new approach to images and a new form of their *mediatisation*."[35] In "the passage from the Mandylia to the self-reflective Veronica," he notes that the Veronica and its copies lose their healing function. Instead the Veronica in the hands of the self-reflective Veronica has a new function: "Where she is present in a picture, she is simultaneously witness and actor, guiding the spectator."[36] Inevitably, Veronica invites us to consider what it is we see in the image that she holds; she summons us to the gaze of self-reflection as we look on the cloth.

To make his point, Wolf comments on Martin Schongauer's "The Large Way to Calvary," writing: "Christ's face itself is very like a vera icon, or better, its archetype (but in turn, as part of a pictorial fiction) and is looking to the viewer who becomes the Veronica, and taking the place of the saintly woman, receives the impression of the face in the screen or veil of her/his mind." On this note he concludes his essay, leading us to consider the function of the Rouault Veronicas. Wolf writes:

> The veil of the Veronica is only a remedy to cleanse the image (we are) so that it becomes true, a remedy to make the mirror brilliant by means of the Holy cloth in expectation of the face-to-face encounter beyond the darkened glass.[37]

In light of its own history, how should we look at the Veronica? For that matter, how should we look at the fifty-eight stations of mercy and war along the way?

Martha Nussbaum, writing on Aristotle's lectures of nature and ethics, insists that his method was to engage his students, asking them whether what he was saying was true or not. Aristotle led his students into a participation of his own inquiry, making his investigations inevitably theirs.

Aristotle's approach was not completely innovative. Reflecting on the dynamic exchange between actor and audience in Euripides' *Hecuba*, Nussbaum writes: "We should imagine these tragedies as they were staged, in a theatre in which each spectator looks across the staged action to the faces of his or her fellow citizens, as the assembled group, imagining, thinking, and feeling together, seeks to teach its identity to the young and to affirm it in themselves."[38] She adds, "the communal nature of this reflective response," (like ourselves walking *sur le chemin,* viewing together the stations of Rouault) "and the fact that it works through emotional responses to tragic events, suggests that *the process of participating in the exercise is already an affirmation of its content*."[39]

Recognizing the similarity between Euripides' and Aristotle's methods, Nussbaum illustrates how Aristotle was constantly appealing to his students for some experiential affirmation of what he proposed as the meaning of being human. In this way, Aristotle was forging a consensual insight between himself and his students: his idea of humanity became theirs. He effectively asked them, "Is that not so?" He was not soliciting a detached, impersonal, inexperienced student, nor was he, therefore, presenting ethical knowledge, like other forms of scientific investigation, as an objective, outside of ourselves, fact. Rather, his proposals were always that, submitted for validation from students: the truth meaning of his proposals were not ascertained independent from the students. Instead, Aristotle waited for their assent. Nussbaum writes, "it is rather clear that the naturalness of friendship

is put forward not as a matter of detached discovery, but as a matter involving evaluation and judgment."[40]

Aristotle was not presenting a world as *he* conceived it. Rather he was revealing to us the way we conceive it. Effectively, he asks us, "Is that not so?" Nussbaum writes, "Aristotle's arguments, then, ask us to recognize the depth and pervasiveness of certain human beliefs and practices, claiming that they are constitutive of humanness, as we conceive it."[41] She adds, "Once we recognize how thoroughly sociability permeates our lives we will, Aristotle thinks, acknowledge that any search for the good life must go on inside a context of relatedness."[42]

Like Aristotle, Rouault engages us to consider whether what he proposes is indeed what we implicitly conceive. He asks, "Who does not wear a mask?"[43] This question calls for our collective response, "no one." When we recognize that we are called to evaluate and judge the question, we realize that we are no longer distant spectators but participants along the way. Similarly as we hear others uttering "no one," we realize that we are not alone in our collective recognition. In giving the answer, we affect among ourselves a collective interior awareness.

Of course, in both Aristotle and Rouault we are engaged in an ethical insight about the nature of being human. We are evaluating and judging and, as Paul Ricoeur would suggest, recognizing.[44] The act of recognizing is a moral act, we recognize the tearful whores, the righteous judges, as well as mercy and war, and we recognize above each, as in plates 33 and 58, the face of Jesus. As Roberto Goizueta notes in his essay in the present volume, the only *Miserere* plate **(no. ##)** in which the risen Jesus explicitly appears is in the act of recognition by doubting Thomas: *Seigneur, c'est vous, je vous reconnais* (Lord, it is you, I recognize you).

Nussbaum concludes, "Human nature cannot, and need not, be validated from the outside, because human nature just is an inside perspective, not a thing at all, but rather the most fundamental and broadly shared experiences of human beings living and reasoning together."[45] Capturing those experiences of tears and shame and hurt are what we broadly share as we together walk the way of mercy and war.

As viewers of *Miserere et Guerre*, we become the pilgrims *sur le chemin*. Rouault is not simply presenting something to us, nor is he simply engaging us. He is doing something to us. What is that?

Each print is an invitation to become more self-reflective. The images are self-reflective not only of the painter and of the subject, but of the viewer as well. We see ourselves in the whores and the wounded and the judges, but we also see ourselves in the veil. Our faces are in the *vera icon,* the true icon. As we pause *sur le chemin*, we discover a revelation, a re-velation, a removal of the veil. When we stand before plates 33 and 58, our faces are being washed, the grime of our sooty masks, which we have painted upon ourselves (*se grimer),* is removed. The exercise of meditating on mercy and war lets us, the viewers, have our faces washed by Veronica. Indeed, the accomplishment of the absorbing history of the veil is precisely the way it mirrors to us what we see; the *vera icon* is held up for us to gaze upon and to see ourselves in the gazing.

Veronica-like, Rouault wipes our faces clean as we look at his images. As we walk along the way, Veronica has her veil still (*encore*), taking away our masks, allowing us to see ourselves as we are. In the very act of looking at his works, our faces are refreshed by the veil and then, we see what has covered our face. It is Veronica's veil and it reveals to us our true face.

At the end of walking on the way, at the end of doing these 58 stations on humanity, we find more than the cross (plate 57). At the end of Rouault's stations, we find instead the veil. We are in the image, after all. Made in his image, we have been taken into the true icon. In the end, we have been taken into his suffering and he into ours.

Inversion

Dr. Paul Breines posits the contemporary Schreber case of Freud and, in his essay, invites us to recognize the inversion.[46] His essay is matched by Mary Louise Roberts's examination of Rouault's

prostitutes. She notes that "Like (Léon) Bloy, Rouault painted his prostitutes in the unbecoming light of reality, but unlike Bloy, he does not judge them morally."[47] One could go further. Rouault depends on the viewer to see the whores as better than others do. He elicits from us a recognition about them. He wants us to see the Respectable judges as hypocrites and the Ugly whores as martyrs. This inversion of categories is very Catholic.

At the very beginning of the Gospel of Luke, John the Baptist is born to an elderly, infertile woman, and Jesus is born to a virgin. The Virgin's own hymn, the *Magnificat*, exults in the rich being brought down and the poor being raised up. Inversion is another name for Catholic.

In her fascinating book, *Wonderful Blood*, Caroline Walker Bynum repeatedly engages in inversions. Regarding our topic she observes that the more wounded the painted depictions of Jesus were, the more they prompted dialogue. A bloodier Jesus was a more animated one. She writes: "the ubiquitous European image of the Man of Sorrows was more pitiful and corpselike in the south: in the north it was livelier and bloodier, demanding dialogue with the devout."[48]

Rouault promotes inversion throughout the series. It makes sense. The man with the crown of thorns is God. God crucified. War, a narrative of power, becomes a narrative of suffering and death. What seems real is not. Semblance and Reality.

But the elements are forever inverting. A woman approaches a man in first-century Jerusalem. She is veiled. She removes her veil and violates a purity law, showing her face. She touches the face of a bleeding man, condemned to die, and violates another purity law by touching his face. She takes the veil from her face, thus liberating her own face from its covering; but now, instead of seeing her face, we see the face of Jesus on the veil that covered her face. A veiled woman now has the true icon. A remarkably liberating movement that violates purity laws ends with a woman walking away with a bloody cloth bearing the face of the Savior.[49]

How would the narrative play out in Rouault's Paris today? What does it mean for a woman from the Middle East to wear a veil in twenty-first-century Paris? The shocked look of first-century Palestinians watching a woman remove her veil, touching a bloodied man's face, and walking away proclaiming the visage to be a *vera icon*, somehow would be equally disarming in contemporary Paris. The Veronica of first-century Palestine is as much a sign of contradiction as in twenty-first-century Paris. How strange this Veronica, who still walks with her linen along the way.

Finally, the inversion is the cloth itself. As Gerhard Wolf notes: "the cloth acts as the background to the part of the body, whereas logically a cloth should have been shown covering and thus rendering invisible the major part of the body. Hence a clear distinction between 'image' and cloth is established by means of an inversion."[50] What could be more refreshing than the bloodied cloth of Jesus' face on Veronica's veil.

The Veronica on Rouault

As Stephen Schloesser and others in this collection note, Rouault was influenced by the very popular account of Veronica in *The Dolorous Passion of Christ* by a German nun and mystic Anne Catherine Emmerich (1774-1823), a text which was foundational to Mel Gibson's *The Passion of Christ*. We can see the influence of Emmerich in the oil painting (among Rouault's first oil paintings) *Le Chemin du Calvaire* (1891, **no. 1**).[51] There Rouault cements two stations together clustering Simeon, who helps Jesus bear the weight of the cross, with Veronica, a scene found only in Emmerich's work. Emmerich's influence can be seen again in Rouault's Miserere when she notes that, after the death of Jesus, Veronica hung the veil at the head of her bed, the very place it is found in **nos. 27ss** and **27tt**.

Nora Possenti Ghiglia also suggests two other influences on Rouault's attraction to the Veronica.[52] First, she refers us to the *Shroud of Turin*, the linen cloth in which, it was claimed, the crucified body of Jesus was wrapped. In 1898, three years after Rouault received Communion for the first time, the *Shroud* was shown in public in Turin for one week, during which a photograph taken of the shroud conveyed a much clearer illustration of a crucified body

than had the naked eye. Aristocrats across Turin and environs flocked to the show, and the imprint was so compelling that it began to be considered a work not done by human hands, an *acheiropoieta*. The shroud was no longer simply a relic; now it bore an image.[53] Ghiglia tells how a physician and friend of Rouault, Paul Vignon, was present in Turin and most assuredly relayed the significance of the event to Rouault.[54] Vignon published his book with these photos in 1902, the same year that Rouault recovered from his nervous collapse.

In fact, much is made of the similarity between the sweatcloth and the shroud, basically suggesting that the sweatcloth came, like the shroud, from the burial tomb. Indeed, the Gospel of John refers to both items being discovered by Peter when he enters the empty tomb: "Then Simon Peter came… and went into the tomb; he saw the linen cloths lying, and the napkin which had been lying on his head, not lying with the linen cloths but rolled up in a place by itself" (John 20: 6-7).

Ghiglia argues that for Rouault the veil of Veronica is inevitably tied to the Shroud of Turin and invokes Bernard Dorival, who claimed that the prototype of Rouault's Christ is not to be found anywhere but the in Shroud of Turin.[55] Still Ghiglia does not accept Dorival's claim outright, for Rouault continued (as she writes in her essay in this volume) to develop the face of Christ throughout his life.[56]

Moreover, in her book length work, she insists that a passage from Hebrews 10:20 helps us to appreciate the effectiveness of the veil as a mediator in our approach to God: "Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Christ, by the new and living way by which he opened for us through the veil, that is, his flesh."

Ghiglia finds much in the identification of the veil with the flesh of Christ and interprets the passage as revealing, when we pull back the veil, the sanctuary of the divine. If we look behind the veil, we will see the face of God.[57]

One could look at it otherwise. Rather than seeing behind the veil, we could say that the veil itself is the revelation. By looking on the face of Christ we see at once the one who saves us, but we see him in such vulnerability that we see his soul. As we suffer, we see his suffering, and in his suffering we see all of our suffering. We are brought into a solidarity. As we cry out of our depths, we enter into his depths. Rather than looking behind the veil for a transcendent, we see in the veil the "painted soul."[58]

As noted earlier, Rouault had numerous options to complete his series. Like Gibson, he could have finished with the cross, as did Emmerich. Or, he could have had Jesus, eyes wide open in glory as did the Maestro of the Veronica and Matthew of Paris. Instead he chose the veil. Rouault does not want us to go elsewhere, neither the cross, nor glory, nor, I think, the divinity. Rather he gives us the image, again. That is, after all, all that we have.

Endnotes

1 Maria Giovanna Muzj, "I due volti della Veronica e l'unità del Mistero nella Testimonianza dei mistici," *Il Volto ei Volti: Cristo,* ed. Fiorenzo Angelini, Atti del VI Congresso Internazionale, (Gorle, Italy: Velar, 2004) 169-182. A miniature of Matthew of Paris and the two prints of the Maestro of Veronica are reproduced in Muzj's essay.

2 On Memling's Veronica, see Bruno Latour, "Visualisation and Social Reproduction," *Picturing power: Visual Depiction and Social Relations*, eds. Gordon Fyfe and John Law (New York: Routledge, 1988) 15-38, esp. 19-22. For another fourteenth century figure, Chaucer on Veronica, see James Rhodes, "The Pardoner's *Vernycle* and His *Vera Icon*, *Modern Language Studies* 13 (1983) 32-40.

3 Recently, Pope John Paul II introduced his own set of the fourteen stations, so that they conformed to the Scriptural narrative of Jesus' passion. See Joseph M. Champlin, *The Stations of the Cross With Pope John Paul II* (Liguori, Missouri: Liguori Publications, 1994). Non-scriptural stations like that of the Veronica wiping the face of Christ are deleted. There are few indications that this new version has been received.

4 James Trilling, "The Image Not Made By Hands and the Byzantine Way of Seeing," *The Holy Face and the Paradox of Representation*, eds., Herbert Kessler and Gerhard Wolf (Bologna: Nuova Alfa Editoriale, 1998) 113.

5 Trilling 113.

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7 Ian Wilson, *Holy Faces, Secret Places* (New York: Doubleday, 1991) 35.

8 G. Cyprian Alston, "The Way of the Cross," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Volume XV. (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1912) http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15569a.htm (accessed on March 1, 2008)

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10 Ewa Kuryluk, *Veronica and Her Cloth: History, Symbolism, and Structure of a 'True' Image* (Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1991) 92-93.

11 Kuryluk 6-7.

12 Eusebius, *The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine* (7.18:1), trans. G. Williamson (Harmondsworth: Penuin, 1965) 301-302.

13 Kuryluk 5.

14 J. K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993) 175.

15 Montague James, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953) 158-159.

16 See Loyal A. T. Gryting, "The Venjance Nostre Seigneur as a Mediaeval Composite," *The Modern Language Journal* 38.1 (1954) 15-17.

17 James 160.

18 Elliott 215.

19 James 157-158.

20 Kuryluk 122.

21 Kuryluk 39.

22 Eusebius, 1. 13:1-22.

23 http://www.apostle1.com/doctrine-addai-syriac-orthodox1.htm

24 Kuryluk 42.

25 On the inability to find any written narrative on this, see Kuryluk, 60-64; Wilson 130-137. See also Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image Before the Era of Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994) 211.

26 Kuryluk 4.

27 See Wolf, "From Mandylion to Veronica," 161. Kesler's article appears in his "Pictures Fertile with Truth," *Iconography at the Crossroads*, ed. B. Cassidy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993) 59-73, esp. 67ff.

28 Wolf 174.

29 Wolf 158.

30 Wolf 167.

31 Wolf 166.

32 Wolf 169.

33 Wolf 169.

34 Wolf 174.

35 Wolf 176.

36 Wolf 178.

37 Wolf 179.

38 Martha Nussbaum, "Aristotle on Human Nature and the Foundation of Ethics," *World, Mind and Ethics: Essays on the Ethical Philosophy of Bernard Williams*, eds. J. E. Altham and Ross Harrison (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1995) 98.

39 Nussbaum 98, emphasis added.

40 Nussbaum 104.

41 Nussbaum 108.

42 Nussbaum 108.

43 See Margaret Miles, "Rouault and the Dynamics of Self-Deception," in present volume.

44 Paul Ricoeur, *The Course of Recognition* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 2005).

45 Nussbaum 121.

46 Paul Breines, "1908/2008: Rouault's *Whore*, Freud's Gender-bent Judge, and Unmasking as Infinite Regression," in present volume.

47 Mary Louise Roberts, "Tears at the Heart of Spectacular Paris: Rouault's Prostitutes," in present volume.

48 Caroline Walker Bynum, *Wonderful Blood: Theology and Practice in Northern Germany and Beyond* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2007) 6.

49 On purity see, Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: an Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo Purity* (New York: Praeger, 1966). On theology and purity, see L. William Countryman, *Dirt, Greed, and Sex: Sexual Ethics in the New Testament and Their Implications for Today* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988). Related to this essay, see Amy Remensnyder, "Pollution, Purity, and Peace: An Aspect of Social Reform between the Late Tenth Century and 1076," *The Peace of God: Social Violence and Religious Response in France around the Year 1000*, eds. Thomas Head and Richard Landes (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press 1992) 280-307.

50 Wolf, "From Mandylion to Veronica," *The Holy Face and the Paradox of Representation*, 152-179, at 161.

51 Stephen Schloesser, "Mystic Masque: Semblance and Reality in Georges Rouault, 1871-1958," in present volume.

52 Nora Possenti Ghiglia, *Il Volto di Cristo in Rouault* (Milan: Ancora, 2003) 17-23.

53 On the fluidity between image and relic see, Kathleen Biddick, "Genders, Bodies, Borders: Technologies of the Visible," *Speculum* 68.2 (1993) 389-418.

54 Paul Vignon, *Le linceul du Christ. Étude scientifique* (Paris: Masson, 1902). cf. Vignon, *The Shroud of Christ* (New York: Dutton, 1902); *Le saint suaire de Turin: devant la science, l'archéologie, l'histoire, l'iconographie, la logique* (Paris: Masson, 1939).

55 *Rouault. Oeuvre peint*, 2 vols. (Monte Carlo: Editions André Sauret, 1988) 1: 174. In fact, quite apart from other arguments, Father Andreas Resch has done extensive research of the prints of both the veil and the shroud to argue that the face on each is identical to the other. See Andreas Resch, *Das Anlitz Christi* (Innsbruck: Resch Verlag, 2005).

56 Nora Possenti Ghiglia, "Rouault's Faces of Christ: Notes for a Pictorial Contemplation," in present volume.

57 Ghiglia, *Il Volto*, 24-34.

58 I am borrowing an insight from Robin Cormack, *Painting the Soul: Icons, Death Masks and Shrouds* (London: Reaktion Books, Ltd., 1997).

Rouault's Christ: A Call to Aesthetic Conversion

Roberto S. Goizueta

Whether Georges Rouault can be described as a "Catholic artist" is a debatable question.[1] At the very least, however, his work can be described as "incarnational" or "sacramental." Indeed, those scholars who have undertaken extended theological analyses of his oeuvre have emphasized the evident sacramentality of Rouault's perspective; the French artist "was above all the painter of the Incarnation."[2] In Rouault we encounter the human and natural as the mediators of the divine and supernatural. The human is a prism through which the divine light splays its beams into a world otherwise bereft of light. Rouault might thus be considered a "Catholic" artist insofar as the sacramental perspective is arguably the central defining characteristic of "the Catholic worldview"

> St. Augustine defined a sacrament as "a visible sign of invisible grace." The sacramental principle proposes that everything in our life-world can be such a sign. In the classic phrase of Ignatius of Loyola, Christians are invited "to see God in all things."[3]

Indeed, it is this sacramental vision that has, throughout the centuries, spurred so much artistic creativity in cultures influenced by Catholic spirituality.

Rouault is thus hardly unique within the long tradition of artists inspired by a sacramental vision of reality. Yet Rouault's work reminds us of an aspect of the sacramental principle too often ignored in Catholic theologies. If "the sacramental principle proposes that everything in our life-world *can be* such a sign" of invisible grace, the believer is nevertheless not allowed to infer that everything *is* such a sign of the divine presence in our world. Indeed, the *dis*continuity between the visible and the invisible, the *dis*junction between our life-world and ultimate Reality is implicit in the very notion of sacramentality. When that discontinuity is not sufficiently attended to, the result is the kind of theological triumphalism that has so often served the interests of political, economic, and ecclesial power, a presumptively incarnational, or sacramental vision that merely identifies the world with God, the status quo with God's presence. This is idolatry pure and simple. The authentic sacramental vision, however, reveals and masks simultaneously: that the natural mediates the supernatural implies that the former is not simply reducible to the latter.

The fundamental safeguard against such triumphalism is the symbol that defines the specific character of the Incarnation, namely, the cross. The central Christian commemoration of the Incarnation is not Christmas, with its smiling baby Jesus lying in a crib in Bethlehem, but the Paschal Triduum, with its

tortured, agonizing Jesus hanging from a cross on Golgotha and, in the end, the still-scarred, resurrected Jesus confronting the disciples in the upper room. This notion of Incarnation, God's "taking flesh" in the world, reads Christmas through the lens of Holy Week, not vice-versa.

In this essay, I will suggest that, if indeed Georges Rouault is "above all a painter of the Incarnation," that assertion can only be properly understood when interpreted in the light of Rouault's image of Christ as one whose point of departure and epistemological lens is Golgotha. This is the Christological vantage point from which we are called to read—backward—the incarnational significance of the Christmas event and—forward—the salvific significance of the Easter event. I will suggest, further, that the Christological contours of Rouault's art can best be appreciated within the context of a "preferential option for the poor." Such a perspective serves to concretize Rouault's incarnational, sacramental vision by locating the source of that vision in the epistemological "rupture" of Christ's Passion, where the glorious beauty of God takes the form of an agonizing, tortured, condemned criminal. "With Rouault," writes Luc Benoist, "there is no Annunciation, very little Resurrection, only a grand and permanent Incarnation, the indelible trace of the Holy Countenance on the veil of Veronica."[4] I will want to nuance Benoist's interpretation, especially with respect to the resurrection, which is indeed present in Rouault's works.

I. *La Sainte Face*

Rouault's Christ is not, in the first instance, the Crucified Christ—though he has given us some very moving images of Christ on the cross—rather his is the Christ of Veronica's veil, the Christ of the *Via Dolorosa*. And when Jesus is seen hanging from the cross, what is most often emphasized is not his death as such but the agony of his Passion and crucifixion, as in plate 35 of the *Miserere* series: "Jesus will be in agony until the end of the world." In plate 20 (no. ##), Rouault calls attention to that most wrenching form of agony, Jesus' experience of abandonment, by humanity…and by God: "Under a Jesus on the cross forgotten there."[5] In plate 31, on the other hand, the agony portrayed is that of Jesus' mother and friends at the foot of the cross; by accompanying him, they share in his agony (**no. ##**).

Rouault's emphasis on the body, the corpus, and specifically on the face rather than on the cross itself precludes precisely the kind of triumphalist misappropriation of the cross that has functioned to legitimate Christian conquest and imperial power from the time of Constantine to the present. Rouault's art makes it clear that the cross cannot be abstracted from the One hanging on it. The question Rouault thus poses in his depictions of Christ's suffering is not, "Is there life after death?, but rather, "Is there life *before* death?. And the answer to that question is not the cross but Veronica's veil, which symbolizes the character of all human beings as wayfarers or pilgrims; "And Veronica with her tender veil still walks the way."[6]

Inspired by the Christian traditions of the Way of the Cross, the *Via Crucis*, the medieval legends surrounding Veronica's veil, and other medieval Christian iconography, Rouault draws his Christological images not only from Scripture but from Christian literary and liturgical traditions, especially as these were retrieved in Catholic literature around the turn of the twentieth century.[7] Rouault was attracted to and inspired by Bloy's mystical identification of Christ's suffering with that of Christians throughout history, and Huysman's view of history's victims as privileged instruments of God's redemptive activity in the world.[8] Rouault drew inspiration as well from earlier Catholic writers, such as Blaise Pascal. The caption under plate 35 (no. ##) is taken from the *Pensées*, in which Pascal warns us to avoid the temptation of Jesus' disciples in Gethsemane, who slept while Jesus wept: "Jesus will be in agony until the end of the world; we must not sleep during that time."[9]

While such portrayals of Jesus' suffering, and the suffering of those with whom he is identified, might at times be perceived as sentimentalized, what precludes such a characterization is the artist's consistent identification of that suffering with sin and, ultimately, injustice: the Holy Countenance is the mirror not only of our own suffering

but of our sin. Jesus does not merely "die" on the cross; he is executed, "eternally flagellated" (plate 3, no. ##). What precludes a sentimentalized interpretation is precisely the "until the end of the world" underscored in plate 35. Jesus' agony is the very same agony of the millions of human beings who even today continue to be flagellated; his flagellation is also theirs. Such an explicit "sacramental" identification compels compassion for the victims, who mediate Christ's presence "until the end of the world." It is thus Christ himself whose ongoing suffering moves us to compassion and, in so doing, judges and convicts us: "we must not sleep during that time." Veronica's veil judges and convicts as surely as it moves us to compassion, precisely because it so moves us.

Veronica's veil precludes an abstract or triumphalist rendering of not only Jesus' crucifixion but also his resurrection. Like the cross, the resurrected Christ has historically served triumphalist theologies and ecclesiologies, identifying the divine glory and power of the resurrection with those persons and institutions who exercise power in the world; the crucifixion then has no intrinsic merit except as a "way station" to the resurrection, death no intrinsic significance except as the necessary means for entering eternal life. From a superficial standpoint, Rouault appears to have little interest in the resurrection or eternal life as such. In the final published version of the *Miserere* (1948), he explicitly decided against including the only plate depicting the resurrection: *Christ is risen in every soul well-born* (Schloesser essay fig. ##). More profoundly, however, the image that he substituted for the resurrection, which would most naturally have appeared at the end of the series, was the image of the Holy Countenance on Veronica's veil: "Through his wounds we are healed." In some sense, then, Veronica's act of compassion represents (literally, re-presents) the resurrection in the *Miserere* narrative.

In his emphasis on Good Friday over Easter, Rouault also stands in a long tradition of Christians who, from the Middle Ages, have placed the crucifix, the Passion, and the Holy Face at the center of their faith. That tradition is alive today especially in Third World countries, among poor churches, where the Way of the Cross is often the culmination of the community's liturgical year. Here also, an observer might question whether the apparent emphasis on the suffering Christ ignores the ultimate Christian message of hope and new life represented by the resurrection. Indeed, might not this be a peculiar form of fatalism or even masochism?

Once again, Rouault provides an answer to that question in his depictions of the veil that Veronica used to wipe Jesus' face and on which his image remains visible. This image appears at the end of both parts of *Miserere*. Also significant is that the only image of a risen Jesus that does appear in the series is the risen Jesus' appearance to Thomas the Apostle, on plate 32, immediately preceding Veronica's veil (no. ##). It is an epistemological moment of judgment: an act of *recognition*.

Given Rouault's understanding of Christ as the Suffering Servant, the resurrection must go beyond an abstract assertion of the victory of "life" over "death." Rather, the very meaning of life and death are now interpreted from the perspective of the abandoned, forgotten victim. The question posed by the victim left to die alone is not only will "I" live on after I die, but will those relationships that have defined me, made me who "I" am, be reconstituted in the wake of their rupture; will *love* survive death. If "life" is not simply the physical existence of an autonomous ego but is itself constituted by those loving relationships that give birth to and nurture the human person, then the victory of life over death necessarily implies not simply the ultimate indestructibility of individual life but the ultimate indestructibility of those loving bonds that themselves define life. And death, if it is to destroy the self, implies the destruction of those bonds.

Where the bonds of love are not destroyed, even in the face of physical death, or when someone dies not abandoned but "accompanied," death has indeed "lost its sting." The resurrection, the victory of love over death, has already begun wherever someone dies accompanied. Consequently, while the resurrection, as traditionally understood, confirms the victory of life over death, this implies above all the victory of love over abandonment, the victory of communion over estrangement. And the ultimate guarantor of that victory can only be

the One unjustly executed and forgotten, without whose ultimate justification and vindication there can be no newly reconstituted community and hence no real victory of "life" over death.

This is the understanding of resurrection suggested in the last three plates of Part 1 of *Miserere*. All three plates involve an act of compassion that generates recognition, which in turn generates hope. That is, the emphasis on Christ's suffering can only reflect an underlying fatalism or masochism if that suffering is viewed in isolation from those with whom Christ is identified in his suffering. Affliction leads to despair when it is suffered alone, in isolation, abandoned; when suffering is *shared* (*com*-passion) it generates hope. In plate 20, Rouault shows the lone crucifix in the foreground of a bleak landscape, with the caption, "under a Jesus on the cross forgotten there" (by both his friends and the Third Republic!). This plate is the last of another triptych, which also includes plate 18, "the criminal is led away…", and plate 19, "his lawyer proclaims his complete lack of responsibility for the guilty verdict" (nos. ##-##). Together, then, these three plates thus represent a multi-level attack on the justice system—and the very act of judging—by linking Christ with the criminal, who are both abandoned by the system. Indeed, Christ is himself the accused, abandoned criminal. This compassionate identification of the abandoned Christ with the abandoned convict is also poignantly portrayed in the painting *The Abandoned* (ca. 1935-1939, **no. ##**), in which Jesus stands before a kneeling, penitent figure. They are accompanied by a child ("Unless you become like little children…") and, in the background, hangs a portrait of the child Jesus in the arms of his mother, the one who did not abandon Jesus on Golgotha.

In a later *Miserere* crucifixion scene, plate 31 (**no. ##**), Rouault shows Jesus surrounded by (presumably) his mother, "the other Mary," and "the apostle whom he loved," who appear saddened and anguished. This one is captioned, "love one another" and is followed immediately by the Doubting Thomas plate and Veronica's veil. Rouault's first crucifix in the series presents crucifixion and death in the form of abandonment, as Jesus was abandoned by his closest friends and experienced even abandonment by the One to whom he had been completely obedient ("My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?"). This is distinguished from the later crucifix which, together with the two plates that follow it, forms—or so I would suggest—a "resurrection triptych" that takes the place, as it were, of a more traditional representation of the resurrection, or the risen Jesus. For Rouault, resurrection implies the reconstitution of the communion ruptured on the way to Golgotha.

This reconstitution of communion as intrinsic to resurrection is poignantly presented in plate 32, with the caption "Lord, it is you, I know you." Here the risen Jesus confronts Thomas, presents the apostle the wounds of his crucifixion, and invites him to believe. As distinct from representations such as Caravaggio's, which emphasize the wound on Jesus' side, Rouault stresses instead the epistemological act of recognition ("I recognize you; *je vous reconnais*"). Recall that, like the other apostles, Thomas had abandoned Jesus on the way to Golgotha; they had fled out of fear for their own lives. Adding insult to injury, Thomas had refused to believe the other apostles who, while in hiding, had been confronted by a Jesus who had been raised from the dead.

Now this same risen Jesus confronts "Doubting Thomas." Like that of the other apostles, Thomas's initial reaction upon seeing Jesus must have included some trepidation, as he knew he had been complicit in Jesus' execution by abandoning his friend to the soldiers. And here was the victim—*Thomas*'s victim—confronting the accomplice with the wounds that Thomas knew he had helped inflict. In the earlier appearances to the disciples, as narrated for instance in Luke 24:36-49, Jesus did not condemn or even judge his fair-weather friends but rather greeted them with an offer of peace, "Peace be with you," and then invited them to break bread together. In the case of Thomas (John 20:27-29), Jesus neither condemns nor judges but, instead, invites Thomas to re-cognize him, that is, to know him again; he invites Thomas into a renewed relationship.[10] The communion torn asunder during Jesus' path to Golgotha is now restored by the Victim's own offer of mercy and invitation to reconciliation.

In the preceding plate, Jesus is pictured on the cross surrounded by those loved ones who had not abandoned him and we are called to emulate their steadfast love: "Love one another." When we do so, we affirm the ultimate indestructibility of love (i.e., life) in the face of death. The precise meaning of such love is then made explicit in the Doubting Thomas scene: to love one another means to restore communion by re-cognizing the Innocent Victim. Such a restoration or reconciliation is intrinsic to resurrection for without it the communal self, the self born from and nurtured by love, is not resurrected; if communion is not restored, only the isolated, autonomous ego is "resurrected"—and that is no resurrection at all because it is no life at all. The key to such reconciliation is once again an epistemological judgment: a recognition of the risen Victim's wounds, wounds which we have helped inflict. Resurrection does not extinguish the wounds; the risen Victim still bears the wounds, and will do so for eternity (plate 35: "Jesus will be in agony until the end of the world…"). Past suffering always remains an intrinsic element of present and future joy. But the wounds can become a means of transformation and reconciliation: "It is through his wounds that we are healed…" (plate 58).

If the last image of Veronica's veil, on plate 58 (no. ##), is meant to provide the *theological* foundation for the entire *Miserere* series by specifying Christ as the Victim whose wounds heal our estrangement, plate 33 (no. ##)—the last plate in Part 1—provides its *ethical* foundation by drawing our attention not so much to Jesus' wounds as to the *act* of compassion compelled by those wounds, Veronica's act. And, like Jesus' agony that continues until the end of the world, so too does Veronica "still walk the road" alongside Jesus in agony, and so too are we called to accompany him on the road. "Blessed are they that have not seen [unlike Thomas] and yet have believed" (John 20:29), Jesus proclaims to Thomas. Veronica's veil reminds us that we who have not seen can believe insofar as we accompany Veronica and Jesus, who still walk the road.

The first half of the *Miserere* thus culminates in this "resurrection triptych," where only the middle plate presents the resurrected Jesus but where that very resurrection is defined in epistemological and ethical terms, as the acts of *recognizing* and *responding* to the victim's wounds, without which there can be no recognition of the resurrection, since the resurrection—like the risen Christ—remains forever a wounded resurrection. Christ is still in agony, still walks the way of the cross today wherever forgotten victims, bearing the crosses they are forced to carry, walk the path to Golgotha. In this context, the Holy Countenance on Veronica's veil confronts us with the questions: What, if any, will be our response? Will we forget the victims? Or will we, instead, "love one another"? Will we recognize them? Will we accompany them on the road?

II. The Crucified People

Consequently, it is impossible to understand Rouault's Christ without considering the entire range of characters that people Rouault's oeuvre; their faces and bodies are simultaneously Veronica's veil, on which we see imprinted the visage of the Innocent Victim, and mirrors on which we see reflected the image of our souls. On Veronica's veil, the Crucified Christ becomes one with the Crucified People who "still walk the road" and, thus, "will be in agony until the end of the world."[11] Here we find the victims who, without judgment or condemnation, invite us to accompany them on the road. Here, too, we find Rouault's judges, public officials, and bourgeoisie who—like Thomas—are imprisoned by their need for security and power ("Are we not all convicts?"—plate 6, no. ##). In the image left imprinted on the veil Veronica recognizes not only the Innocent Victim but herself as well ("Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children." Luke 23: 28). Like Thomas, she recognizes her complicity in violence and, like Thomas, is transformed by the wounds, converted by the Innocent Victim. The prostitutes, sad clowns, beggars, convicts, and other marginal figures in Rouault's works thus enflesh, incarnate Jesus' "agony until the end of the world." Insofar as we, like Veronica, walk alongside them, wiping their tear-stained faces, we will see reflected in

their faces our own complicity and, hence, our own enslavement.

Recognizing those whom the world has judged, we will recognize how we also are under judgment, we also have been convicted. The difference between the prostitute and the judge is simply that the former *knows* it; hence the overwhelming sadness so often conveyed by Rouault's depictions of prostitutes. Like the clown, the prostitute wears her make-up openly. "There is, in reality, nothing more complex and ticklish," writes Pierre Courthion, "than to paint people who display their make-up without hypocrisy. Rouault saw in them the heart-rending side of humanity."[12] If the precondition for accepting God's offer of mercy is a recognition of our need for mercy, then the prostitute is perhaps closer to the Reign of God, closer to confronting her own neediness, than is the judge or upstanding *bourgeois gentilhomme*:

> In his work, Rouault recalls the searing words spoken by Jesus Christ two thousand years ago, against the hypocritical, the self-satisfied, and the lukewarm who neither despair nor hope: 'Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you."... For Rouault identified himself with both clown and prostitute, as a reaction against people with "principles," as well as against the heroes of Roman history, so dear to the Beaux-Arts and to the bourgeoisie. He identified himself with them.[13]

The only unforgivable sin (the "sin against the Holy Spirit" of the gospels) is self-satisfaction, since the self-satisfied—by definition—refuse to accept God's mercy and forgiveness. For Rouault, "evil 'is not so much sordid, loathsome vice,' as pharisaical satisfaction. 'It is putting up readily with the physical and moral wretchedness of others, and even taking advantage of it, in order to excuse oneself.'"[14]

The act of compassion for those whom the world judges to be "ugly" and thus guilty implies not only an ethical conversion but an aesthetic, epistemological conversion as well. That is, the recognition of the Crucified Convict in the faces of all the other convicts in history, and the act of compassion that generates that recognition, imply not only an ethical conversion but also an epistemological, or aesthetic conversion: what was previously deemed "ugly" is now seen as a reflection of the Divine Glory, the Divine Beauty. "Beauty," Ernest Hello observed, "is the form that love gives to things."[15] On Veronica's veil, the bloodied, scarred face of a convicted criminal becomes the revelation of the Divine Beauty. If beauty is thus dependent on compassion and even, in some special way, on compassion for those whom the world has deemed "ugly," then the opposite of beauty is not ugliness but apathy (and its handmaiden, self-satisfaction):

> "The grandeur of man comes in that he knows himself to be miserable," wrote Pascal, and his words apply to the work of Rouault. For modern man, who either no longer knows that he is miserable or tries to hide it by a hundred distractions, the grandeur is replaced by an all-consuming apathy of spirit. Here lies the focus of Rouault's work. It was precisely this hebetude that his "ugliness" was to protest. Rouault once said: "this old anguished world, so little civilized, is quite peacefully dancing its way back to chaos."[16]

It is here, in the manifold forms that human apathy takes, in "the lukewarm who neither despair nor hope," that Rouault finds genuine evil, genuine ugliness. This epistemological reversal thus does not ignore the reality of ugliness but locates it, like beauty, within an ethical and, ultimately, theological framework: the criterion of beauty is the Christ of the Via Dolorosa or, more specifically, the revelatory act of compassion compelled by Christ's visage. Thus Rouault's art demands from us a three-fold conversion: epistemological, ethical, and aesthetic. Not coincidentally, these correspond to the traditional identification of the Divine with the three "transcendentals": the True, the Good, and the Beautiful.

Such an aesthetic conversion has profound theological implications and implies a theological conversion as well, for to encounter and recognize

the God of Jesus Christ is to have our previous notions of beauty and ugliness overturned. Here, as Stephen Schloesser has argued, we see played out the conflict between Huysman's "supernatural realism" and the ultramontanist aesthetic of Christ "as the most beautiful of all human beings."[17] Inspired especially by Grünewald's "Crucifixion," Huysman's conversion to Catholicism implied a profoundly aesthetic conversion to the sacramental vision of a Decadent Catholicism.[18]

The particularity and historicity of the Beautiful as represented in the Crucified, as made present in *this* face, *this* body, precludes any notion of beauty that ignores the wounds, the dangerous memories forever inscribed even on Christ's risen body.[19] Just as the life vindicated by the resurrection is no life "in general," but life in solidarity with the crucified victims of history, still in agony, so too is the empathy evoked by this aesthetic symbol not a passion for life in general, but a com-passion, an affirmation of the possibility of a reconciled life. In the person of the Crucified and Risen Christ, the human love of the Beautiful is revealed as but a response to God's own prior, passionate love for us, a desire which—as the Apostle Thomas discovered—will not be forever frustrated.

Too often attempts to articulate a Christian theology of beauty, or theological aesthetics, have not been grounded in the particularity of the Crucified and Risen Christ and in our practical response to him, in our solidarity with him as we encounter him today among the crucified victims of our societies. The appropriate response to the beauty of the Crucified and Risen Christ can only be the act of solidarity, the praxis of accompaniment that, in the words of Jon Sobrino, includes the imperative of "taking the victim down from the cross."[20] In that response alone is revealed the radical difference between a merely human aesthetic and a Christian, divine aesthetic in which the paradigmatic form of God's glory is that of a criminal hanging from a cross. Our response of solidarity with the "criminals" of history is what transforms an aesthetic theology, where beauty remains an abstraction divorced from the particularity of the Crucified and Risen Christ, into a theological aesthetic "that makes demands on us."[21] It is the difference between the comforting and comfortable beauty of Mt. Tabor, which so enthralled the apostles that they did not want to leave ("let us make three tents here"), with the terrifying beauty of Calvary, which they sought to avoid at all costs—even though Jesus himself had commanded them to leave Tabor and follow him to Calvary. The starting point for a Christian theological aesthetic can only be the One who "had no form or beauty:"

> He had no form or comeliness that we should look
> at him, and no beauty that we should desire him.
> He was despised and rejected by all;
> a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;
> and as one from whom people hide their faces
> he was despised, and we esteemed him not.
> Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows;
> yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.
> But he was wounded for our transgressions,
> he was bruised for our iniquities;
> upon him was the chastisement that made us whole,
> and with his stripes we are healed.
> All we like sheep have gone astray
> we have turned every one to his own way;
> and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:2-6)

It is in our response to the one "despised and rejected" that He is revealed as truly the form of divine Beauty.

Having affirmed the "beauty" of life on Calvary, where Christ's love endures even in the face of abandonment, one can go on to affirm the beauty of life in general (or life on Mt. Tabor); the reverse is not the case. It is our response to Christ's own agony "until the end of the world," that is the criterion of our love of life, for "it is not the beauty of the cross, but of *the one crucified*, that is rescued at Easter."[22] This is the light in which we should read Bloy's famous accusation directed at Rouault: "you

are attracted solely by what is ugly…if you were a man who prayed, a religious man, a communicant, you could not paint those horrible pictures…".[23] Though Rouault refused to respond verbally to Bloy's increasingly vituperative assaults (and insults), his art may have been Rouault's most effective response: he was able to paint "those horrible pictures" precisely *because* he was "a man who prayed, a religious man, a communicant:"

> [Rouault] had not hesitated to break with the traditional definition of the word "beauty," the extreme relativity of which had been pointed out by Voltaire. "If you ask a Chinaman to give an example of a beautiful thing, he will name a toad," we read in the Dictionnaire philosophique.… [Rouault] acknowledged that beauty…is not always easy to distinguish; the harder to distinguish because "blind men love talking about colors"…[24]

L'Aveugle parfois a consolé le voyant (The blind have sometimes consoled the sighted) (**no. ##** plate 55) Perhaps the blind can best describe the wonders of colors…and the ugly best describe true beauty. Perhaps the hungry can best fathom the extraordinary gift that is the fruit of the earth…and the eternally flagellated Victim best describe the Resurrection. *That* is the meaning of sacramentality, the meaning of Catholicity. Perhaps Georges Rouault was a "Catholic artist" after all.

Endnotes

1 For discussions of Rouault as a "Catholic artist," see Stephen Schloesser's essay in this volume and Jacques Maritain, *Georges Rouault* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc, 1954).

2 William A. Dyrness, *Rouault: A Vision of Suffering and Salvation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1971) 183.

3 Thomas Groome, *What Makes us Catholic: Eight Gifts for Life* (San Francisco: Harper, 2003) 84-85.

4 Luc Benoist, "Georges Rouault," *Tendances* 37 (1965) 441-464; qtd. in Dyrness 185.

5 More concretely, the plate also refers to the French 1905 Act of Separation of Church and State, which removed crucifixes from courtrooms, thus representing the Third Republic's abandonment of crucifixes. See Schloesser essay in present volume.

6 For the metaphor of the "pilgrim" in Rouault, see essays by Dahme, Keenan, and Schloesser in the present volume.

7 Dyrness 186ff.

8 Dyrness 186ff

9 Dyrness 191.

10 See Roberto Goizueta, "The Crucified and Risen Christ: From Calvary to Galilee." Presidential Address, *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America* 60 (2005): 57-71.

11 Jon Sobrino, *The Principle of Mercy: Taking the Crucified People Down from the Cross* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994), 49-57. This identification is also pictured, for instance, in Rouault's "Christ in the Slums."

12 Pierre Courthion, *Georges Rouault* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1961) 86.

13 Courthion 100.

14 Courthion 188.

15 Qtd. in Maritain 32.

16 Dyrness 105-106.

17 Stephen Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism: Mystic Modernism in Postwar Paris, 1919-1933* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), esp. 27-45. For an analysis of the ultramontanist aesthetic, see also Michael Driskel, *Representing Belief: Religion, Art, and Society in Nineteenth-Century France* (University Park: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1992).

18 Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism* 41-45. For a related contemporary philosophical understanding of conversion, see the classic work of Bernard Lonergan, S.J., *Method in Theology* (New York: Seabury, 1972) as well as the development of Lonergan's notion of conversion set forth in Robert Doran, S.J., *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations: Toward a Reorientation of the Human Sciences* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981).

19 For an analysis of "dangerous memories," see Johann Baptist Metz, *Faith in History and Society: Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 2007)

20 Sobrino, *The Principle of Mercy*.

21 Metz, *Faith in History and Society*.

22 Metz 390 (my emphasis).

23 Qtd. in Courthion 104.

24 Courthion 240.

1
Le Chemin du Calvaire
The Way to Calvary, 1891
Oil on canvas, 15 3/16 x 26 3/8 inches
Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, CT. Gift of Alfred Jaretzki, Jr. 1951.257

2
Job, 1892
Oil on canvas, 21 1/4 x 26 1/2 inches
Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris

3
Étude pour *Samson tournant la meule*
Study for Samson Turning the Millstone, 1893
Chinese ink on paper, 8 3/8 x 4 15/16 inches
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles County Fund, 59.14

4

Samson tournant la meule

Samson Turning the Millstone, 1893

Oil on canvas, 57 3/4 x 44 7/8 inches

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Museum Purchase with the De Sylva Fund, M.46.8.2.

5
L'Accusé
The Accused, 1907
Oil on canvas, 30 x 41 3/4 inches
Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris AMVP1914

6

Christ aux outrages

Christ Mocked, 1905

Oil on paper mounted on canvas, 39 x 25 1/4 inches

Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, VA . Gift of Walter P. Chrysler, Jr., 71.519

7a-b
Filles
Whores (double-sided), 1905
Oil on paper, 39 3/8 x 25 1/2 inches
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Alex L. Hillman, 49.106ab

8

Tête de clown

Head of a Clown, 1907

Oil, ink, and watercolor on cut-and-pasted paper mounted on board, 16 x 12 3/4 inches

The Museum of Modern Art, New York. The William S. Paley Collection, SPC58.1990

9
Clown (*buste*)
Bust of a Clown, 1907 or 1908
Oil on paper on board , 24 3/8 x 19 3/8 inches
Dumbarton Oaks, House Collection, Washington, DC

10

Fille, or *Femme aux Cheveux Roux*

Whore, *or* Woman with Red-brown Hair, 1908

Watercolor, gouache, and pastel on paper mounted on board, 28 1/4 x 20 1/4 inches

Mitchell-Innes & Nash, New York, MI&N 6001

11

Fille accoudée, or *Minauderie,* or *L'Entremetteuse*

Whore Leaning on Elbows, *or* Coyness, *or* The Procuress, 1906

Watercolor and pastel on board, 12 1/8 x 9 1/2 inches

The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest, 503.1941

12
La belle Hélène
The Beautiful Helen, 1910-1919
India ink, tempera with glue and pastel
on paper, 11 4/5 x 7 1/2 inches
Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris AMD93

13
Hortense/pucelles et non pucelles
Hortense / virgins and non-virgins, 1902-1914
Watercolor and India ink on paper, 11 4/5 x 7 1/2 inches
Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris AMD75

14
L'avantageux / le surhomme
The Attractive / Superman, 1912-1913
Tempera with glue, watercolor, and charcoal on paper
12 1/5 x 7 inches
Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris AMD160

15
Pédagogue / Kultur (Inscription: "*Laissez venir à moi les petits enfants*")
Teacher / *Kultur* (Inscription: "Let the little children come unto me"), 1912-1913
Tempera, charcoal, and pastel on paper, 12 2/5 x 7 2/3 inches
Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris AMD121

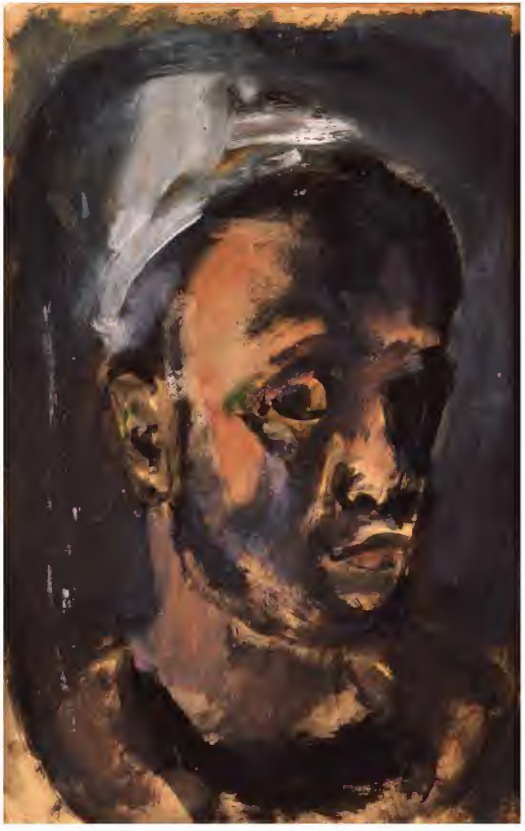
16
Bureaucrate
Bureaucrat, 1917
Watercolor and crayon on paper, 11 3/4 x 6 1/2 inches
The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, 140.1935

17
Baptême du Christ
Baptism of Christ, 1911
Gouache, pastel, watercolor, and ink on paper, 12 1/2 inches, circumference
Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris

18
Acrobates XIII
Acrobats XIII, 1913
Gouache on paper mounted on canvas, 41 3/4 x 29 inches
Mitchell-Innes & Nash, New York, MI&N 6567

19
Le Superhomme
The Superman, 1916
Oil on paper mounted on board, 40 7/8 x 29 1/8 inches
Mitchell-Innes & Nash, New York, MI&N 6491

20
Projet pour Ubu Colon
Study for Ubu Colonial, ca. 1917
Gouache, India ink and pastel on paper mounted on canvas, 29 x 41 inches
Private Collection



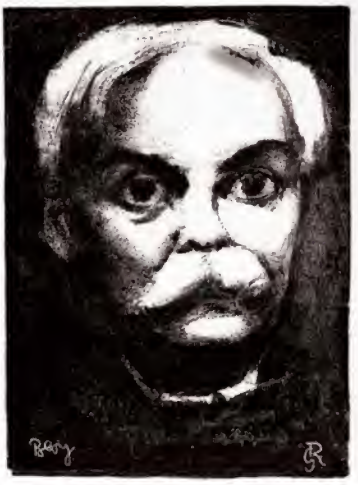
21
Autoportrait
Self-portrait, 1920-21
Oil on paper, 19 x 12 inches
Private Collection

22a.
Charles Baudelaire

22b.
Gustave Moreau

22c.
Joris-Karl Huysmans

22 a-f
Souvenirs intimes
Personal Remembrances, 1926
Lithographs on paper, 9 x 6 3/4 inches
Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris



22d.
Léon Bloy

22e.
Self-Portrait

22f.
André Suarès

Left:
23
La Petite banlieue. No. 5: Faubourg des longues peines (Dans la rue)
The Small Poor District. No. 5: Faubourg of Longtime Suffering (In the Street), 1929
Lithograph on paper, 12 1/5 x 8 3/4 inches
Collection of Sandra and Robert Bowden

Below:
24
"Super flumina Babylonis"/ Exode
"By the waters of Babylon"/Exodus
Intaglio on paper, 16 7/10 x 22 4/5 inches
Collection of Sandra and Robert Bowden

25
Être Dempsey or *l'Acrobate*
To Be Dempsey *or* Acrobat, 1927-1929
First state, lithograph on Arches paper 19 x 12 3/4 inches
Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris

26a.
Satan II, 1926

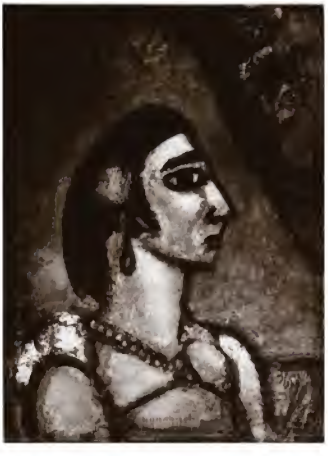
26b.
Satan III, 1926

26c.
Satan IV, 1926

26 a–n
Les Fleurs du mal
The Flowers of Evil, 1926- 1927
14 black and white aquatints on paper, 17 1/2 x 13 1/5 inches
Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris

26d.
"C'est une femme belle et de riche encolure..."
"It is a beautiful woman, richly dressed...", 1927

26e.
"Fière autant qu'un vivant, de sa noble stature..."
"As proud of her noble stature as if she were still alive...", 1927



26f.
Fleur du Mal
Flower of Evil, 1926

26g.
"La Prostitution s'allume dans les rues..." "Prostitution is aflame in the streets...", 1927

26h.
Squelette
Skeleton, 1926

26i.
Nu de profil
Nude in Profile, 1926

26j.
"Lorsque tu dormiras, ma belle ténébreuse…"
"When you will be asleep, my beautiful dark one…", 1927

26k.
"La Débauche et la mort…"
"Debauchery and death…", 1926

26l.
Christ, 1927

26m.
Satan, 1926

26n.
Christ aux outrages
Christ Mocked, 1926

27 a–fff

Miserere

Printed 1922-1927; Published 1948

58 copperplate engravings on Arches laid paper

Boston Public Library Q.202.155

27a.

Miserere mei, Deus, secundum magnam misericordiam tuam.
Have mercy on me, O God, in your great mercy. 1923

27b.
Jesús honni...
Jesus reviled... 1921-22

27c.
toujours flagellé...
forever scourged... 1922

27d.
se réfugie en ton coeur, va-nu-pieds de malheur.
takes refuge in your heart,
vagabond of misfortune. 1922

27e.
Ne sommes-nous pas forçats?...
Are we not slaves?... 1926

27f.
nous croyant rois.
believing ourselves
to be kings. 1923

27g.
Qui ne se grime pas?
Who does not wear a mask? 1923

27h.
Solitaire, en cette vie d'embûches et de malices.
Alone, in this life of pitfalls and malice. 1922

27i.
Rue des Solitaires.
Street of the Lonely. 1922

27j.
Il arrive parfois que la route soit belle...
Sometimes it happens that the road is beautiful... 1922

27k.
au vieux faubourg des Longues Peines.
in the old faubourg of Long Suffering. 1923

27l.
Jean-François jamais ne chante alleluia…
Jean-François never sings alleluia… 1923

27m.
au pays de la soif et de la peur.
in the land of thirst and fear. 1923

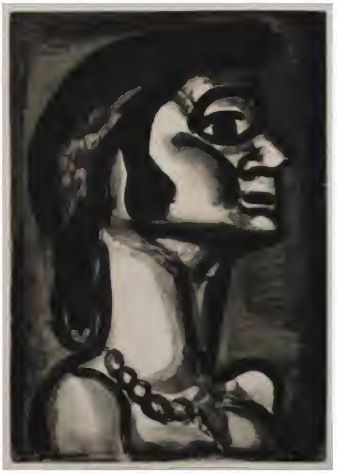
27n.
Le dur métier de vivre…
The hard metier of living… 1922

27o.
il serait si doux d'aimer.
it would be so sweet to love. 1923

27p.
En tant d'ordres divers, le beau métier d'ensemencer une terre hostile.
In so many different realms, the noble metier of sowing seed in a hostile earth. 1926

27q.
"*hiver lèpre de la terre.*"
"winter plague of the earth." 1922

27r.
Fille dite de joie.
Girl said to be joy. 1922

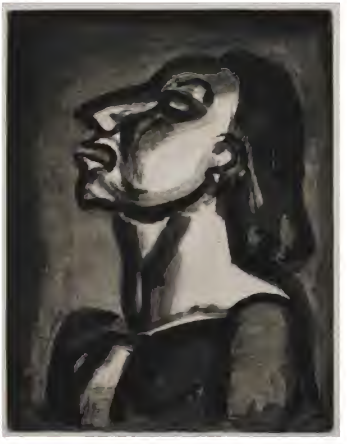


27s.
En bouche qui fut fraîche, goût de fiel.
In the mouth that was sweet, the taste of gall. 1922

27t.
Dame du Haut-Quartier croit prendre pour le Ciel place réservée.
Woman from a chic district believes that she has a reserved seat in Heaven. 1922

27u.
Femme affranchie, à quatorze heures, chante midi.
Emancipated woman, at two o'clock p.m., chimes twelve noon. 1923

27v.
Le condamné s'en est allé …
The condemned is led away… 1922



27w.
son avocat, en phrases creuses,
clame sa total inconscience …
while his lawyer, in hollow phrases,
proclaims his complete innocence… 1922

27x.
sous un Jésus en croix oublié là.
beneath a crucifix forgotten there. 1926

27y.
"Il a été maltraité et opprimé et il
n'a pas ouvert la bouche."
"He was oppressed and afflicted, yet
he opened not his mouth." 1923

27z.
Sunt lacrymae rerum…
There are tears in things… 1926

27aa.
Demain sera beau, disait le naufragé.
Tomorrow will be fair, said
the shipwrecked. 1922

27bb.
Chantez Matines, le jour renaît.
Sing Matins, the day is reborn. 1922

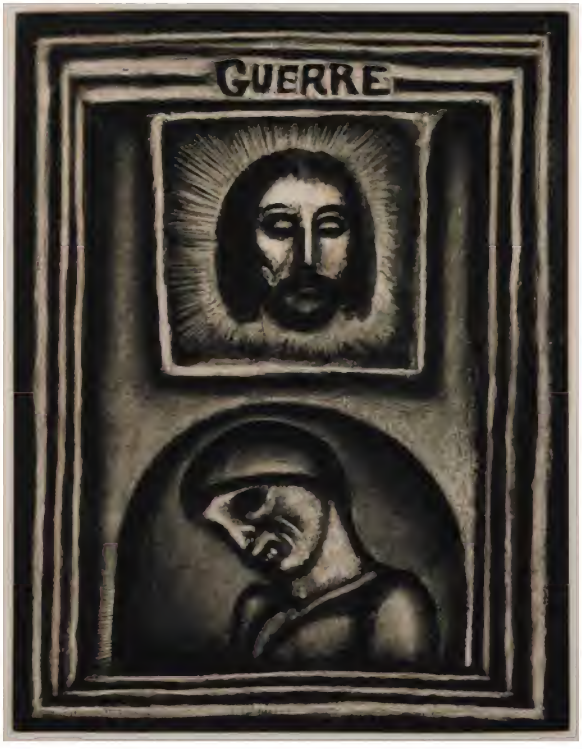
27cc.
"Nous... c'est en sa mort que nous avons étés baptisés."
"We...it is into his death that we have been baptized." (Date illegible)

27dd.
"Celui qui croit en moi, fût-il mort, vivra."
"The one who believes in me, even should he die, will live." 1923

27ee.
"Aimez-vous, les uns les autres."
"Love one another." 1923

27ff.
Seigneur, c'est vous, je vous reconnais.
Lord, it is you, I recognize you. 1927

27gg.
et Véronique au tendre lin passe encore sur le chemin…
and Veronica with the soft linen still walks along the road… 1922



27hh.

"Les ruines elles-mêmes ont péri."

"Even the ruins themselves have perished." 1926

27ii.
"Jésus sera en agonie jusqu'à la fin du monde..."
"Jesus will be in agony, until the end of the world..." 1926

27jj.
Ce sera la dernière, petit père!
This will be the last, Papa! 1927

27kk.
Homo homini lupus.
Man is a wolf to man. 1926

27ll.
Face à face.
Face to face. 1926

27mm.
Chinois inventa, dit-on, la poudre à canon, nous en fit don.
They say that the Chinese invented gunpowder and gave it to us as a gift. 1926

27nn.
Nous sommes fous.
We are crazy. 1922

27oo.
Augures.
Auguries. 1923

27pp.
Bella matribus detestata.
Wars, dread of mothers. 1927

27qq.
"Nous devons mourir, nous et tout ce qui est nôtre."
"We are doomed to die, we ourselves
and all that is ours." 1922

27rr.
Mon doux pays, où êtes-vous?
My sweet country, where are you? 1927

27ss.
De profundis…
Out of the depths… 1927

27tt.
"Le juste, comme le bois de santal,
parfume la hache qui le frappe."
"The just, like sandalwood,
perfume the axe that strikes them." 1926

27uu.
Au pressoir, le raisin fut foulé.
In the winepress, the grape was crushed. 1922

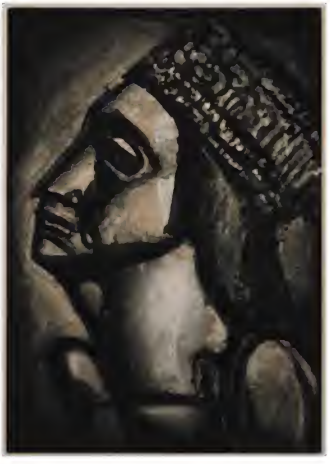
27vv.
La mort l'a pris comme il
sortait du lit d'orties
Death took him as he was getting
out of his bed of nettles. 1922

27ww.
"Plus le cœur est noble,
moins le col est roide."
"The more the heart is noble the
less the collar is stiff." 1926

27xx.
"Des ongles et du bec."
"Tooth and nail." 1926

27yy.
Loin du sourire de Reims.
Far from the smile of Reims. 1922

27zz.
Dura lex sed lex.
The law is hard but it is the law. 1926

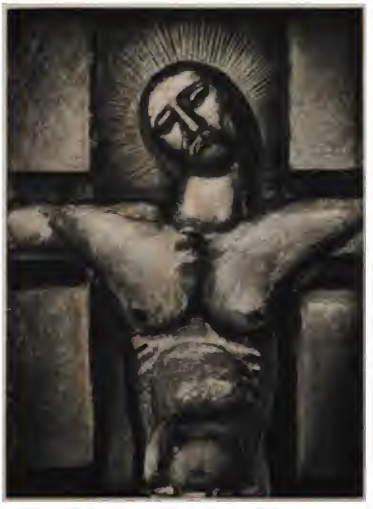


27aaa.
Vierge aux sept glaives.
Virgin of the seven swords. 1926

27bbb.
"Debout les morts!"
"On your feet, dead men!" 1927

27ccc.
L' aveugle parfois a consolé le voyant.
The blind have sometimes
consoled the sighted. 1926

27ddd.
En ces temps noirs de jactance et d'incroyance, Notre-Dame de la Fin des Terres vigilante.
In these dark times of vainglory and unbelief, Our Lady of the Ends of the Earth remains vigilant. 1927



27eee.
"Obéissant jusqu'à la mort et à la mort de la croix."
"Obedient even unto death, death on a cross." 1926

27fff.
"C'est par ses meurtrissures que nous sommes guéris."
"It is by his wounds that we are healed." 1922

28 a-u

Réincarnations du Père Ubu (Reincarnations of Father Ubu)

Printed 1928; Published 1932.

22 etchings and 104 wood engravings on paper, 17 1/3 x 13 1/16 inches

Boston Public Library Q.202.5

28a.

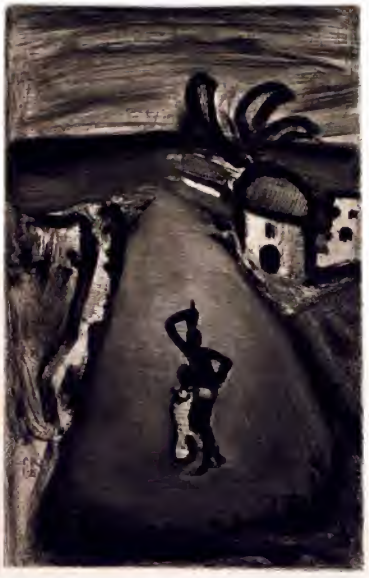
Frontispièce: Incantation

Frontispiece: Incantation, 1928

Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, MA. Gift of Selma Erving, class of 1927, 1976: 18-64

28b.
Incantation

28c.
Bamboula



28d.
Paysage tropical
Tropical landscape

28e.
Noces
The Wedding

28f.
Nu assis
Seated nude

28g.
Nu
Nude

28h.
L'Administrateur colonial
The colonial administrator

28i.
Le Politicard
The scheming politician

28j.
Fléau colon
Colonial scourge

28k.
Le Père Ubu chantre
Father Ubu, songster

28l.
Le Directeur de théâtre
The theater director

28m.
Les Deux Matrones
Two matrons

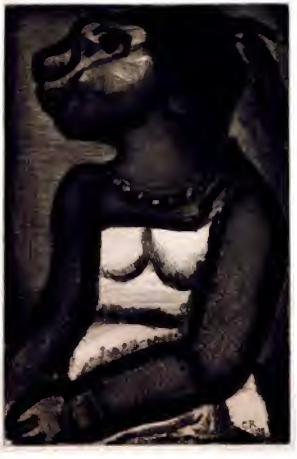
28n.
Sainte-Nitouche
Saint Never-touch

28o.
Mademoiselle Irma

28p.
Bon candidat Boudoubadabou
The good candidate Budubadabu

28q.
Bon électeur
The good voter

28r.
Profil
Profile



28s.
Cristal de roche
Rock crystal

28t.

Le Noir libéré

The emancipated black man

28u.

Le Poisson volant

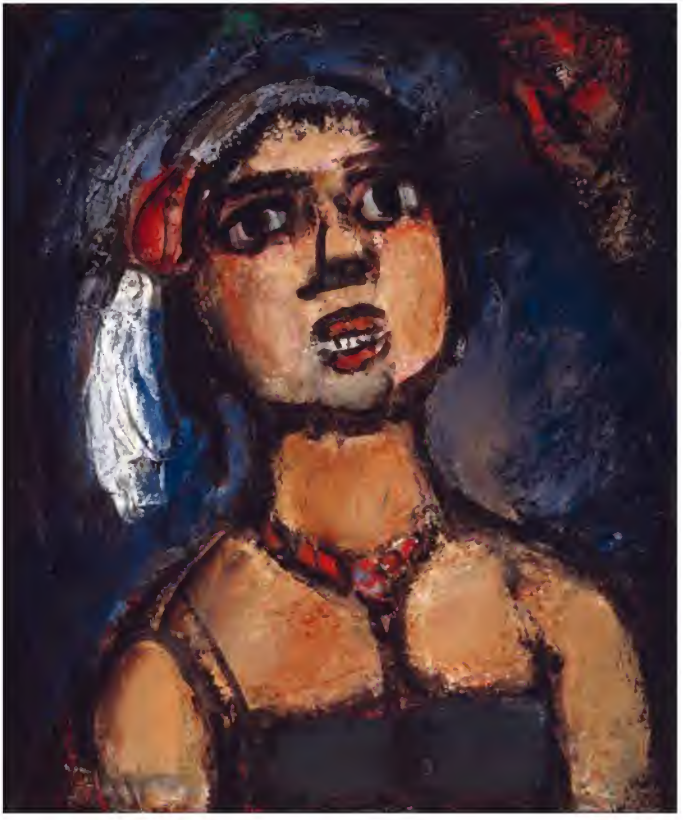
The flying fish

Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, MA. Gift of Arthur and Margaret Studdiford Stein, class of 1952, 2001:15

29
Reclining nude
Woodblock on paper, 11 x 7 ½ inches
Boston Public Library

30
"Dying Slave" figure in trio
Woodblock on paper, 3 ½ x 7 3/4 inches
Boston Public Library

Two examples of the 104 wood engravings found in *Réincarnations du Pére Ubu* (pages 24 and 125 respectively).



31
Chanteuse à la plume blanche
Singer with a White Plume, 1928
Oil on board, 29 1/2 x 25 5/16 inches
Saint Louis Art Museum, Gift of Sydney M. Shoenberg Sr., 77:1975

32

Ne sommes nous pas tous forçats? (Projet pour *Miserere*)
Are we not all slaves? (Study for *Miserere*), 1920-1929
India ink, oil, and gouache on paper mounted on canvas, 40 1/10 x 28 3/4 inches
Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris

33

Le clown jaune

The Yellow Clown, 1929-1930

Oil, India ink, and gouache on engraved paper, 20 9/10 x 15 inches

Private Collection

34

Le vieux clown

The Old Clown, 1929-1930

Oil, India ink, and gouache on engraved paper, 18 9/10 x 14 3/5 inches

Private Collection

35a
Illustration no. 1

35b
Illustration no. 2

35a-d
Illustrations from *Carnets de Gilbert*, 1931
Copperplate engravings, sheet: 7 1/2 x 5 1/3 inches
Boston Public Library

35c
Illustration no. 3

35d
Illustration no. 5

36
Verlaine, 1933
Lithograph on paper, 16 3/4 x 12 1/2 inches
Boston Public Library

37
Saint Jean-Baptiste
Saint John the Baptist, 1933
Lithograph on paper, 12 1/5 x 15 3/4 inches
Collection of Sandra and Robert Bowden

38a.

Le Clown à la grosse caisse

Clown with a Bass Drum

38 a–h

Cirque, 1930

8 color aquatints on paper, 17 9/10 x 13 1/4 inches

Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris

38b.
Parade

38c.
Le Jongleur
The Juggler

38d.
Ballerine
Ballerina

38e.
Clown et enfant
Clown and Child

38f.
Le clown jaune
The Yellow Clown

38g.
Amazone
The Equestrienne

38h.
Le vieux clown
The Old Clown

39

Parade, 1931-1939

Oil, ink, and gouache on canvas, 23 1/4 x 18 1/10 inches

Private Collection

40

Qui ne se grime pas?

Who does not wear a mask?, post-1930

Oil and gouache on paper mounted on linen, 25 1/2 x 19 1/2 inches

Indianapolis Museum of Art, Gift in memory of William Ray Adams, 48.123

41

La Sainte Face

The Holy Face, 1933

Oil and tempera on paper, mounted on canvas, 36 x 26 inches.

Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, AM 1929P

42
Parade, 1934
India ink and gouache on engraved paper, 11 4/5 x 7 7/10 inches
Private Collection

43
La petite Écuyère
The Little Equestrienne, 1934
India ink, oil, and gouache on paper mounted on canvas, 12 x 8 1/3 inches
Private Collection

44a.
Copper plate for black ink

44b.
Copper plate for green ink

44c.
Copper plate for red ink

44 a-h
Cancelled plates and proof impressions for *Douce-Amère* (Bittersweet) from *Cirque de l'Étoile filante* (The Shooting Star Circus), 1934
Plates: 12 1/4 x 7 7/8 inches
Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris

44d.
Proof impression in black

44e.
Proof impression in black

44f.
Proof impression in colors

44g.
Proof impression in colors

44h.
Proof impression in colors with annotations

45a.
Frontispièce-Parade, 1934

45 a–q
Cirque de l'Étoile filante
The Shooting Star Circus, 1936-1938
17 color etchings on paper, 17 1/2 x 13 2/5 inches
Boston Public Library Q.202.43

45b.
Les Ballerines
Ballerinas, 1934

45c.
La petite Écuyère
The little Equestrienne, ca. 1935

45d.
Enfant de la balle
Child of the Circus, 1935

45e.
Jongleur
Juggler, 1934

45f.
Pierrot, 1935

45g.
Master Arthur, 1934

45h.
Pierrot noir
Black Pierrot, 1935

45i.
Auguste, 1935

45j.
Tristes os
Weary Bones, 1934

45k.
Amer citron
Bitter Lemon, 1935

45l.
Le Renchéri
One up-man-ship, 1935

45m.
Le petit Nain
The little Dwarf, 1934

45n.
Douce-amère
Bittersweet, 1934

45o.
Madame Louison, 1935

45p.
Dors mon amour
Sleep, my love, 1935

45q.
Madame Carmencita, 1935

46a.
Femme fière
Proud Woman, 1938

46 a–l
Les Fleurs du mal
The Flowers of Evil, 1936 - 1938
12 color aquatints on paper, 14 x 10 inches
Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris

46b.
"Fière autant qu'un vivant, de sa noble stature…"
"As proud of her noble stature as if she were still living…", 1937

46c.
Laquais
Lackey, 1937

46d.
Courtisane aux yeux baissés
Courtesan with Lowered Eyes, 1937

46e.
Trio, 1938

46f.
Tombeau
Tombstone, 1936

46g.
Juges
Judges, 1938

46h.
Nu de profil
Nude in Sideview, 1936

46i.
Passion
Passion, 1937

46j.
Les Trois croix
Three Crosses, 1938

46k.
Christ (de face)
Christ (front view), 1938

46l.
Paysage à la tour
Landscape with Tower, 1938

47a.
Frontispièce, 1935

47 a–q
Passion, 1939
17 color etchings on paper, 17 1/2 x 13 2/5 inches
Boston Public Library Q.202.42 fol.

47b.
Christ (de profil)
Christ (in profile), 1936

47c.
Ecce dolor
"Behold sorrow," 1936

47d.
Ecce Homo
"Behold the man," 1936

47e.
"Apache…Chacal béni par toutes les académies"
"A ruffian…a jackal blessed by all
the learned societies," 1935

47f.
Le Christ et Mammon
Christ and Mammon, 1936

47g.
Dame à la huppe
Lady with a Crest, 1936

47h.
Christ au Faubourg
Christ in the Faubourg, 1935

47i.
Christ et sainte femme
Christ and the Holy Woman, 1936

47j.
Christ et pauvres
Christ and the Poor, 1935

47k.
Pêcheur
Fisherman, 1935

47l.
Christ et disciples
Christ and Disciples, 1936

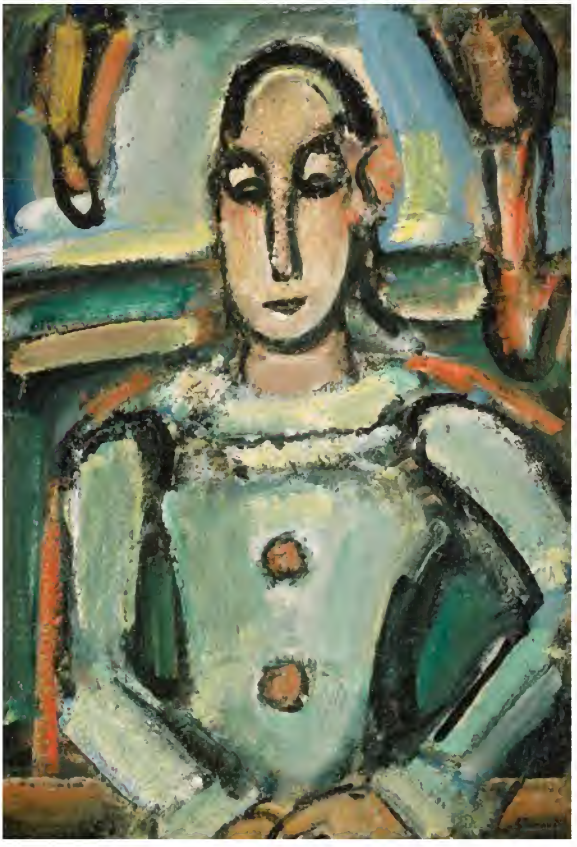
47m.
Rencontre
Meeting, 1936

47n.
Paysans
Peasants, 1936

47o.
Le vieil homme chemine
The Old Man Travels On, 1936

47p.
Chemineau
Vagabond, 1935

47q.
Aide-bourreau (portant un des bois de la croix)
Executioner's Assistant (Carrying a Piece of the Cross), 1936



48

Pierrot, 1937–38

Oil on canvas, 46 1/2 x 35 1/4 inches

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Gift of the Sara Lee Corporation, 2000.677

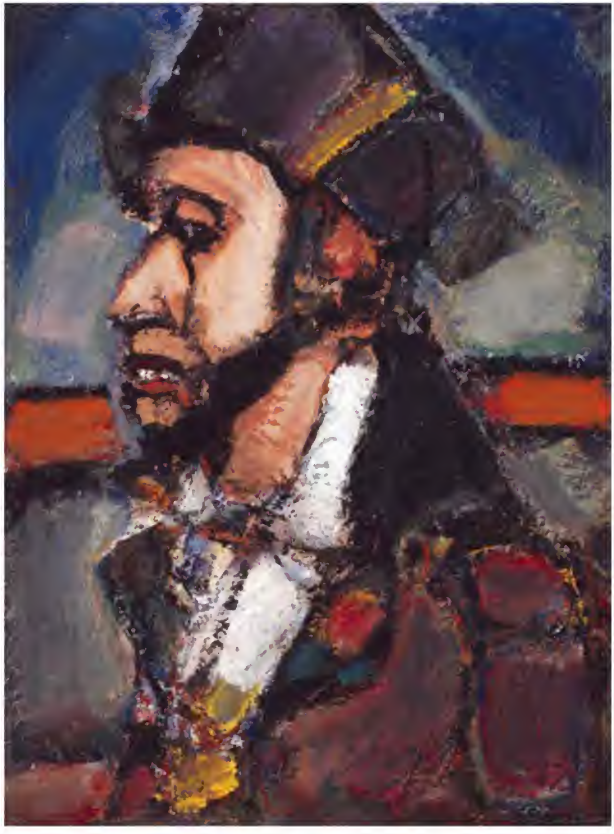
49

Pierrot

Pierrot (with a Rose), 1936

Oil on canvas, 36 1/2 x 24 5/16 inches

The Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Samuel S. White 3rd and Vera White Collection, 1967-30-76



50
Le dernier romantique
The Last Romantic, ca. 1937
Oil on canvas, 26 3/4 x 19 3/4 inches
La Salle University Art Museum, Philadelphia

51
Paysage légendaire
Mythical Landscape, 1936
Oil on canvas, 20 x 19 1/2 inches
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Robert Lehman Collection, 1975.1.203

52
Crépuscule
Twilight, 1937
Oil on canvas, 25 3/4 x 38 7/8 inches
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Nate Spingold, 1956.230.3

53
Christ et docteur
Christ and the High Priest, ca. 1937
Oil on canvas, 18 7/8 x 12 7/8 inches
The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.

54

Trois juges

Three Judges, ca. 1938

Oil on canvas, 27 1/4 x 21 1/2 inches

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Frederick and Helen Serger Collection;
Bequest of Helen Serger, in honor of William S. Lieberman, 1990.274.3

55
L'Italienne
The Italian Woman, 1938
Oil on panel, 31 1/4 x 24 13/16 inches
Dallas Museum of Art, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Vladimir Horowitz. 1976.53

56
Nu au miroir
Nude at Mirror, 1939
India ink and oil on paper mounted on panel, 13 1/5 x 8 inches
Private Collection

57
Automne
Autumn, 1938
Aquatint on paper, 22 3/5 x 30 inches
Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris

58
La Baie des Trépassés
The Bay of the Deceased, 1939
Aquatint on paper, 30 2/5 x 22 3/5 inches
Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris

59

"En ces temps noirs de jactance et d'incroyance Notre Dame de la Fin des Terres vigilante" "Notre Dame des Champs"

In these dark times of vainglory and unbelief, Our Lady of the Ends of the Earth remains vigilant, 1939

Oil on paper, mounted on canvas, 29 1/4 x 24 1/4 inches

Dayton Art Institute, Gift of Mr. John W. Sweeterman in memory of Jeanne F. Sweeterman, 1996.255

60
Verlaine à la Vierge
Verlaine with the Virgin, ca. 1939
Oil on paper mounted on canvas, 39 3/4 x 29 1/8 inches
The Phillips Collection, Washington D.C.

61

Abandonné

The Abandoned, ca. 1935-1939

Oil over intaglio print on paper, 25 5/16 x 19 3/8 inches

Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester, Marion Stratton Gould Fund, 53.30

62

Le Clown blessé II

The Wounded Clown, 1939

Oil on paper mounted on masonite, 72 x 47 inches

The Currier Museum of Art, Manchester, New Hampshire. Museum Purchase: Currier Funds 1964.2

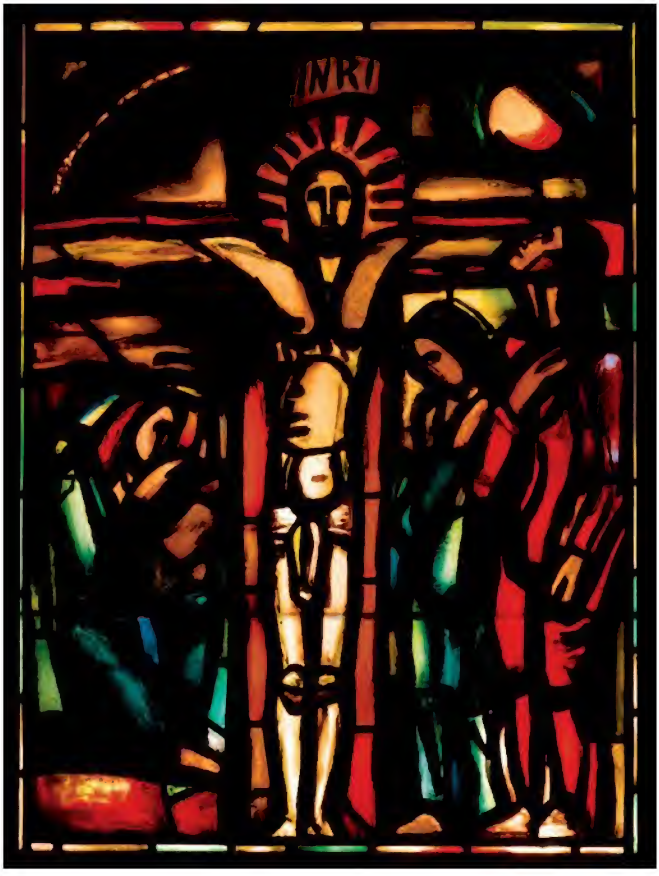
63

"*Jésus sera en agonie jusqu'à la fin du monde*"

"Jesus will be in agony until the end of the world," after 1930

India ink wash on paper, 22 4/5 x 16 1/2 inches

Private Collection



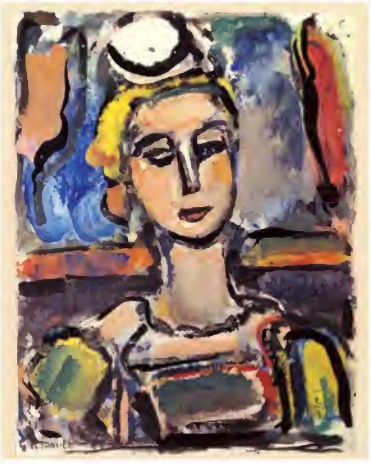
64

Christ en croix

Christ on the Cross, 1939

Stained glass, 41 x 31 inches

Collection Musée d'art Contemporain de Montréal, A65.76.VI



65a.
La Roussalka
The Mermaid, 1943

65b.
Margot, 1943

65c.
Acrobate
Acrobat, 1943

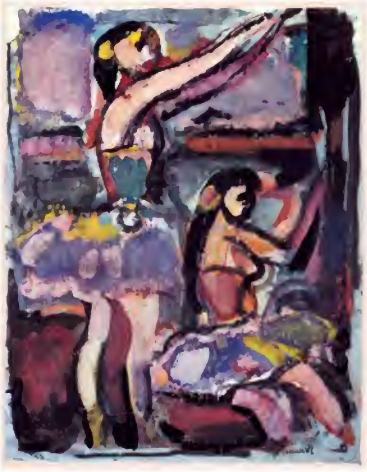
65 a–o
Divertissement
Diversion, 1943
15 color prints on paper
Boston Public Library Q. 202.49

65d.
Le Moqueur
The Mocker, 1943

65e.
Madame Ixe
Madame X, 1943

65f.
Mange-tout
Eats everything, 1943

65g.
Arlequin
Harlequin, 1943



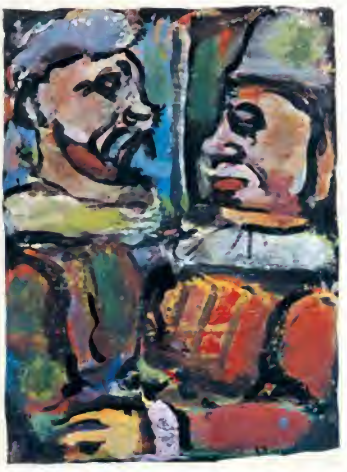
65h.
Danseuses
Dancers, 1943

65i.
Pierrot blanc
White Pierrot, 1943

65j.
Gentil Bernard
Kindly Bernard, 1943

65k.
Quiquengrogne
Whatthehell, 1943

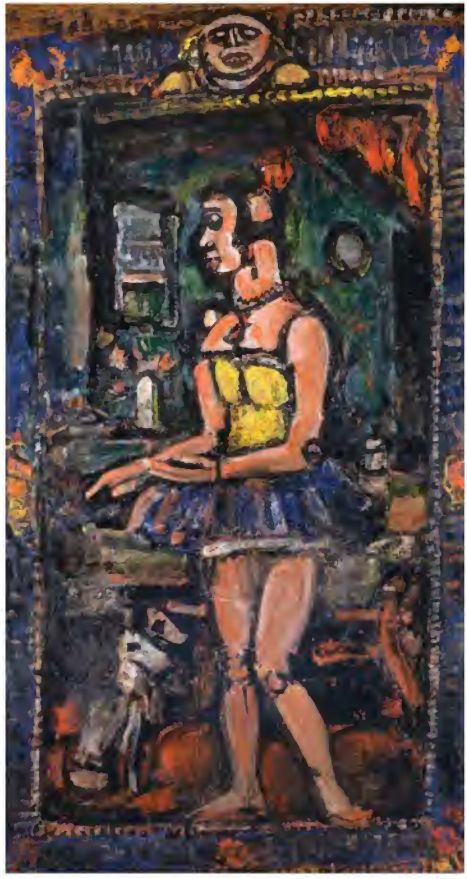
65l.
Pierrot noir
Black Pierrot, 1943



65m.
Les deux têtus
Two Stubborn Men, 1943

65n.
Les deux Anciens
Two Elders, 1943

65o.
Petit page rouge et or
Small Page in Red and Gold, 1943



66
Danseuse
Dancer, 1930-31
Oil on paper mounted on cloth, 85 x 46 inches
Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris

67
Véronique
Veronica, ca. 1945
Oil on canvas mounted on panel, 19 3/5 x 14 inches
Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, AM4250P

68
Profil de clown
Profile of a Clown, 1948
Oil on paperboard mounted on panel, 26 x 18 7/8 inches
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Fanny P. Mason Fund in memory of Alice Thevin, 51.702

69
Vieux faubourg (mère et enfants)
Old Faubourg (mother and children), 1951
Oil and India ink on canvas, 10 x 8 inches
Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris

70

Sarah, 1956

Oil on canvas mounted on panel, 21 3/5 x 16 1/2 inches

Fondation Georges Rouault, Paris

71
Et Véronique au tendre lin (Sainte Face)
And Veronica with the soft linen (Holy Face), pre-1922
Ink and gouache on tracing paper,
25 1/4 x 19 1/2 inches
Donation Mme Rouault et ses enfants 1963;
Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, AM4231 (386)

72
Et Véronique au tendre lin
And Veronica with the soft linen, pre-1922
Ink and gouache on tracing paper,
23 3/5 x 19 7/10 inches
Donation Mme Rouault et ses enfants 1963;
Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, AM4231 (383)

73

Sunt lacrymae rerum

There are tears in things, pre-1926

Ink on paper mounted on canvas, 25 3/5 x 18 1/5 inches

Donation Mme Rouault et ses enfants 1963;

Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, AM4231 (391)

74

Sunt lacrymae rerum

There are tears in things, pre-1926

Ink and gouache on paper mounted on canvas, 25 3/5 x 18 1/2 inches

Donation Mme Rouault et ses enfants 1963;

Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, AM4231 (392)

75

Et Véronique au tendre lin

And Veronica with the soft linen, 1922-39

Ink and gouache on paper mounted on canvas, 25 1/4 x 19 1/2 inches

Donation Mme Rouault et ses enfants 1963;

Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, AM4231 (382)

76
Et Véronique au tendre lin (*Sainte Face*)
And Veronica with the soft linen (Holy Face), 1922-39
Ink and gouache on tracing paper mounted on canvas, 25 3/5 x 19 7/10 inches
Donation Mme Rouault et ses enfants 1963; Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, AM4231 (387)

77
Et Véronique au tendre lin (*Sainte Face*)
And Veronica with the soft linen (Holy Face), 1922-39
Ink and gouache on tracing paper, 25 2/5 x 19 3/10 inches
Donation Mme Rouault et ses enfants 1963; Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, AM4231 (389)

78
Sainte Face
Holy Face, n.d.
Oil on paper mounted on canvas, 23 3//5 x 19 7/10 inches
Donation Mme Rouault et ses enfants 1963;
Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, AM4231 (822)

79

Verlaine à la Vierge

Verlaine with the Virgin, 1929-39

Oil, ink and gouache on paper mounted on canvas, 20 1/2 x 14 2/5 inches

Donation Mme Rouault et ses enfants 1963;

Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, AM4231 (544)

80

La Sainte Face (harmonie jaune)

Holy Face (yellow harmony), after 1930

Oil and gouache on an engraving on paper, 25 3/5 x 19 3/5 inches

Donation Mme Rouault et ses enfants 1963;

Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, AM4231 (519)

81

La Sainte Face

Holy Face, 1939-45

Oil, ink, gouache on paper, 20 4/5 x 34 3/5 inches

Donation Mme Rouault et ses enfants 1963;

Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, AM4231 (635)

82

La Sainte Face (harmonie verte)

Holy Face (green harmony), after 1936

Ink and oil on paper mounted on canvas, 6 3/5 x 4 3/4 inches

Donation Mme Rouault et ses enfants 1963;

Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, AM4231 (197)

83
La Sainte Face
Holy Face, ca. 1939
Oil on lithograph on paper, 18 1/2 x 13 3/5 inches
Donation Mme Rouault et ses enfants 1963;
Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, AM4231 (516)

84

Sunt lacrymae rerum

There are tears in things, post-1936

Ink and gouache on paper mounted on canvas, 25 1/2 x 17 1/3 inches

Donation Mme Rouault et ses enfants 1963;

Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, AM4231 (444)

85

Sunt lacrymae rerum

There are tears in things, 1931-39

Oil, gouache, and ink on paper mounted on canvas, 25 3/5 x 19 3/4 inches

Donation Mme Rouault et ses enfants 1963;

Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, AM4231 (443)

86

Ecce homo

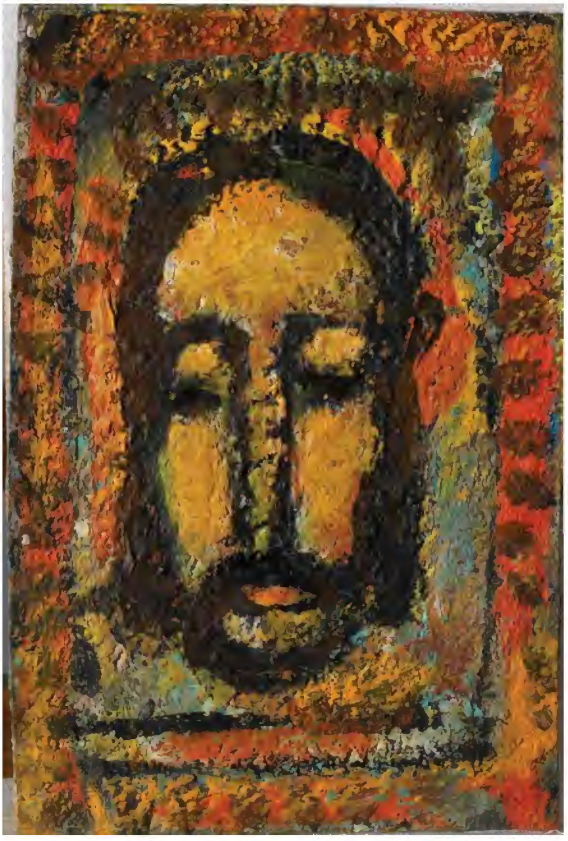
Behold the Man, 1922 (reworked ca. 1950)

Oil, ink, and gouache on paper, 20 9/10 x 17 1/10 inches

Donation Mme Rouault et ses enfants 1963;

Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, AM4231 (487)

87
Sainte Face (*éléments décoratifs*)
Holy Face (decorative elements), ca. 1949
Oil and ink on paper, 15 x 12 2/5 inches
Donation Mme Rouault et ses enfants 1963;
Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, AM4231 (185)



88

Sainte Face (harmonie cuivrée)

Holy Face (copper harmony), ca. 1953

Oil, ink and gouache on paper, 12 1/10 x 8 1/10 inches

Donation Mme Rouault et ses enfants 1963;

Musée National d'Art Moderne: Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, AM 4231 (633)

CONTRIBUTORS TO THE CATALOGUE

Jody Blake, author of *Le tumulte noir: Modernist Art and Popular Entertainment in Jazz-Age Paris, 1900-1930*, is curator of the Tobin Collection of Theatre Arts at the McNay Art Museum.

Naomi Blumberg is assistant curator and publications coordinator at the McMullen Museum.

Paul Breines, author of *Tough Jews: Political Fantasies and the Moral Dilemma of American Jewry*, is a member of the History Department at Boston College.

Claude Cernuschi, author of books on Abstract Expressionism, Jackson Pollock, and Oskar Kokoschka, is a member of the Fine Arts Department at Boston College.

Stephan Dahme, a doctoral student in Art History at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität (Munich), is writing a dissertation on Georges Rouault's "unfinished works".

Anne Davenport, a scholar of medieval and early-modern philosophy, is a member of the Honors Program faculty at Boston College.

Bernard Doering, author of *Jacques Maritain and the French Catholic Intellectuals* and translator of *Jacques and Raissa Maritain: Beggars for Heaven*, is an emeritus professor of French literature at the University of Notre Dame.

Thomas Epstein, a scholar of Russian and comparative literature, is a member of the Honors Program faculty at Boston College.

Marie Garraut is a doctoral student in *lettres modernes* at the École Normale Supérieure.

Nora Possenti Ghiglia, a scholar of the philosophy of art and spirituality, is the author of *I tre Maritain* and *Il volto di Cristo in Rouault*.

Roberto S. Goizueta, author of *Caminemos con Jesús: Toward a Hispanic/Latino Theology of Accompaniment*, is a member of the Theology Department at Boston College.

Jeffery W. Howe, a scholar of modern art and curator of several exhibitions including *Edvard Munch: Psyche Symbol and Expression* and *A New Key: Modern Belgian Art from the Simon Collection*, is a member of the Fine Arts Department at Boston College.

Soo Yun Kang, author of *Rouault in Perspective: Contextual and Theoretical Study of His Art* and co-author of *Georges Rouault's Miserere et Guerre*, is a member of the Department of Art and Design at Chicago State University.

James F. Keenan, S.J., most recently the author of *The Works of Mercy*, is a member of the Theology Department at Boston College.

John McCoy, a specialist in graphic arts, is a designer at the McMullen Museum.

John J. Michalczyk, a producer of documentaries for PBS television dealing with conflict resolution, disabilities and social justice, is a member of the Fine Arts Department at Boston College.

Susan A. Michalczyk, an author of autobiographical and sociological interpretations of figures such as Michelangelo, Italo Calvino and James Ensor, is a member of the Honors Program faculty at Boston College.

Margaret R. Miles, most recently the author of *A Complex Delight: The Secularization of the Breast, 1350-1750*, is emerita professor of historical theology, Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley.

Gael Mooney, a painter who exhibits regularly at the Bowery Gallery in New York, writes and lectures on art and religion.

Sheila Nowinski, a graduate of Boston College and presently a doctoral candidate in the History Department at the University of Notre Dame, is writing a dissertation examining religious and social change in postwar France (1944-1968).

David Quigley, author of *Second Founding: New York City, Reconstruction, and the Making of American Democracy*, is a member of the History Department at Boston College.

Virginia Reinburg, author of articles on religious life and practice in late medieval and early modern France, is a member of the History Department at Boston College.

Mary Louise Roberts, most recently the author of *Disruptive Acts: The New Woman in Fin-de-siècle France*, is a member of the History Department at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

Stephen Schloesser, S.J., author of *Jazz Age Catholicism: Mystic Modernism in Postwar Paris, 1919-1933*, is a member of the History Department at Boston College.

Jean-Marie Tézé, S.J., author of *Au cœur de la violence, Jérôme Bosch* and *Théophanies du Christ*, is a sculptor and teaches aesthetics at the Facultés jésuites de Paris, Centre Sèvres.

Tara Ward, a doctoral candidate in the Art History Department at Boston University, is writing a dissertation on the 1913 work of Robert Delaunay, Fernand Léger, and Sonia Delaunay.

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Boston College

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